

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES**STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE INCLUDES NEW ITEMS OF INTEREST**

We've got some new things happening at the 2016 Statewide Trails Conference in May. This year will 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.
- Two 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.
- Pre-conference session – Terrain Dynamics with Mike Shields on Wednesday, May 4.

Please contact Alaska Trails (info on masthead) if you are interested in participating in a poster session or the vendor tables. For more information on the pre-conference session see: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trainings.html>

The conference will be held May 5-7 in Anchorage at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. It will feature two great keynote speakers and some new topics. Fairbanks author and adventurer Ned Rozell and Sitka Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins will be the keynote speakers. Rozell has written newspaper columns about science topics for the past 21 years. In the third year of that job, he hiked from Valdez to Prudhoe Bay along the gravel road that runs beside the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. He wrote the book *Walking my Dog Jane* about that experience and will share stories from that adventure at the trails conference. Kreiss-Tomkins is the youngest member of the Alaska House. He is also one of the founders of the Trans-Alaska Trail concept (see story in Statewide News). He will speak on the importance of trails in Alaska and how they can help Alaska become an international destination for adventure travel.

The conference will also feature some new topics. See below:

2016 Statewide Trails Conference – What's new this year?

- Helical Pile Elevated Walkways
- Maps and Apps – a panel on new technology
- Physics for Trail Builders
- Pitching a Bigger Tent
 - How can we increase diversity on trails?
- Combatting Invasives on Trails
- Trail Bridge Options
- Hotel Rate – Only \$89.99 + tax

For registration, agenda, speaker bios and more see: www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html

'PICK. CLICK. GIVE.' AND THANK YOU!

Thanks to all the donors who gave a part of their Permanent Fund Dividend to Alaska Trails through the "Pick. Click. Give." program. Your support means a lot to us and we appreciate it.

For more information on "Pick. Click. Give" see: www.pickclickgive.org.

TRAIL TRAINING CLASSES TO BE HELD IN APRIL IN ANCHORAGE

Three days of trail classes will be held in Anchorage this April. The classes are being sponsored by Alaska Trails, the US Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Sign up now, as these classes can fill up in a hurry. Fees cover the cost of training materials, food and related expenses. You can register via Paypal at the Alaska Trails website: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trainings.html>. For more information or to set up other billing arrangements please call [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049) or e-mail office@alaska-trails.org

Information for all courses

Where: BLM Anchorage Field Office; 4700 BLM Road. (Near the junction of 68th Avenue and Elmore Road. This is NOT the Campbell Creek Science Center; turn right into the BLM main offices.)

Instructors: Jamie Schmidt, USFS lead trainer and 1-2 other USFS trainers depending on class size. Jaime has more than 20 years of Forest Service recreation and trail management experience in Alaska, Idaho, and Montana.

Cost: \$300 for all three days

Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives

When: April 19, 1-5pm

Cost: \$75

Description: Trail Fundamentals include five basic five concepts that are cornerstones of effective trail planning: design, construction, maintenance and management. Trail Management Objectives are the documentation of the intended purpose and management of a trail, based on management direction. During this course, you will learn how to put these tools to work for an effective trail program. After this course, you will be able to provide data collection and management tools that are truly useful for local trail program managers, and to provide quality data for a variety of planning, information and reporting needs.

Note: This course can be taken alone; you do not need to sign up for TRACS (below).

TRACS: Trail Assessment and Condition Surveys

When: April 20-21, 8am-5pm

Cost: \$275

Description: TRACS is an approach to efficiently conducting trail assessment and condition surveys resulting in quality field data that is useful for a wide variety of purposes. In this course you will learn how to put first-hand field knowledge into a useful format for program planning, management, inventory and accountability. You'll learn how to collect the right trail information, the first time. You will learn how to use the condition assessment survey matrix, which helps you to prioritize the collection of field data to meet trail planning and management needs.

Notes: You must take, or have recently taken, Trail Fundamentals before you can take TRACS.

Lunch is provided on these two days.

'LIVE WORK PLAY' CAMPAIGN INCLUDES TRAIL ASPECT

Alaska Trails is happy to be one of many partners in the trails portion of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation's Live Work Play Campaign. The Anchorage Park Foundation has a great video and other information about the effort at: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/>

ALASKA TRAILS HAS A NEW WEBSITE

We now have a new website thanks to board member Andy Schroeder. We are using Weebly, a web-hosting service with a drag-and-drop website builder. Weebly is one of several website services that makes website management accessible to people without tons of training in computer coding. Our Executive Director Steve Cleary is quickly learning how it works.

By using this service we can allow long-time website volunteer Tom Clark to finally "retire." Many thanks to Tom for his years of work on the website. And many thanks to Andy for stepping up to make this happen.

Our web address is still the same: <http://www.alaska-trails.org>

ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILERS READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



As you start planning trail building and maintenance projects, remember that Alaska Trails has mobile tool caches available to loan to organized trail groups in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. One cache is in the Fairbanks area and the other is in Anchorage/Mat-Su Valley area.

The trailers were upgraded recently and have a plethora of trail tools including Mcleods, pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much, much more. If you would like to borrow one of the caches, please contact us (info on masthead).

FOUR EASY WAYS TO HELP FUND ALASKA TRAILS

With the help of other organizations, you can help Alaska Trails continue advocating for trails.

BAGOY'S: Anchorage-based Bagoy's Florist and Home helps through its Helping Hands web fundraising program (<http://tinyurl.com/oavza6p>). When you order online from Bagoy's (www.bagoys.com) there is a check box at the bottom of the payment page that says "This is a Helping Hands order." When you check that box, the list of enrolled organizations are shown and you can choose Alaska Trails from the list.



FRED MEYER REWARDS: Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Alaska Trails at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for Alaska Trails or by our nonprofit number – 91035. Then, every time you shop and use your rewards card, you are helping Alaska Trails earn a donation! You still earn your rewards points, fuel points, and rebates, just as you do today.



AMAZONSMILE: If you shop at Amazon, please take the simple extra step of signing up for AmazonSmile.



It's the same Amazon website, but when you shop from AmazonSmile, you can make a donation to Alaska Trails at the same time: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/73-1677483>

GOODSEARCH: GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to charities designated by the user. You use it just as you would any search engine, and, it's powered by Yahoo!. Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Alaska Trails as the charity you want to support.



ALASKA TRAILS LINKS

- 2015 Annual Report: http://www.alaska-trails.org/about_us/documents/reports/2015_Annual_Report.pdf
- Recent postings from our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590
 - Thanks to outgoing Alaska Trails board member Paul Clark for his time and service on the board. Paul has spearheaded the Alaska Trail Volunteers program and been a great asset to Alaska Trails. He'll still be very involved in that program I am happy to say.
 - Chugach Trail Volunteers were out on the Turnagain Arm Trail

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

IDEA FOR A 'TRANS-ALASKA TRAIL' UNVEILED IN VALDEZ

Some trail advocates are proposing turning the maintenance path that runs along the Trans-Alaska Pipeline into a "Trans-Alaska Trail." An open house on the concept was held recently in Valdez, where about 40 people attended.

The idea started in November 2014 in the office of Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins. It has since grown and includes many more supporters, including Levitation 49, an economic diversification group in Valdez that focuses on the "mountain sports lifestyle." That group will be the organizing authority for the trail, and act as a place to direct resources and fundraising efforts. Trail project organizers have been working with a number of government agencies on liability and permitting issues. They have also been reaching out to groups and businesses, such as REI, Outdoor Research, and the International Mountain Bicycling Association.

The culmination of the trail idea would be to create "Alaska's version of the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails," according to project's website. Find out more here:

- The Trans-Alaska Trail website: <http://aktrail.org>
- An Alaska Dispatch News story: <http://tinyurl.com/zgjjz7c>

BILL WOULD RAISE SNOWMACHINE REGISTRATION FEES

A bill introduced by Reps. Cathy Tilton and Mark Neuman would raise registration fees on snowmachines from the current \$5 per year/ \$10 for two years to \$20 per year. House Bill 319 would also change the amount and structure of multi-year fees. The current law states that the fee "shall be multiplied by two for a four-year registration and multiplied by three for a six-year registration." The proposed bill would do away with the four-year registration and would change the six-year registration to \$50. Snowmobile registration fees currently pay for the Snowmobile Trails Program. The new bill does not address if that will continue.

The bill was introduced by, and has wide support from, the snowmachine community, according to State Trails Coordinator Darcy Harris.

"It was brought to the legislators by the community," Harris wrote in an email. "They have been talking about it for many years and finally got traction."

- See the bill here: <http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/29/Bills/HB0319A.PDF>
- Find the current law here: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/statutes.asp#28.10.421>
- Sign up to track bills here: http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/btmf_login.asp?session=29
- Read about the Snowmobile Trails Program here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>

BUY A PASS TO SUPPORT ALASKA STATE PARKS

Below is a note from the most recent (Kodiak) Island Trails Network newsletter. It's a good idea for state parks across the state. Many of the best trails in the state are on land run by Alaska State Parks. Whether you consider it a donation, a good deal, or a combination, consider buying an annual Alaska State Parks pass.

A Shameless Plug for our State Parks

Please take a moment to purchase an annual park pass to support our Alaska State Parks. It's a powerful and timely statement you can send to the legislature in support of Kodiak State Parks, which are threatened with closure due to budget shortfalls. Permits are \$50 for one vehicle, or \$75 for two vehicles at the same address. Passes are good for the calendar year and are honored at most state parks, including those in Kodiak.

Order a pass here: https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/Passes.cfm?mc_cid=616772759e&mc_eid=2e22dc9bcb

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Grant applications for the state Snowmobile Trails Program are available starting April 1. Public notice for applications must be posted by June 10. Grant applications must be submitted or postmarked by July 1.

This program, administered by the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use. The program also provides funds for snowmobile safety and educational programs.

Matching funds are not required for safety and educational grant programs. Grant funds are generated from annual registration fees paid to the State by snowmobile owners statewide. For more information on the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program and the Grooming Pool, please visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/q33aj9m>

For general grant questions regarding the program please contact the Grants Administrator (907/269-8709). For project development questions please contact the State Trails Coordinator (907/269-8699). Or contact either one through the Department of Natural Resources email page (<http://tinyurl.com/3umsvj5>).

SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

Alaska Trails asks that you please keep in mind how your trail activities might affect other trail users, especially in the spring.

As snow melts and the ground thaws, the trails become extremely muddy. Using really muddy trails at this time can result in ruts that stay all summer when the trails dry out. Those ruts can make the trails difficult to use all summer and help create erosion by keeping water on the trails.

Early season damage of trails is a recurring problem. Many people are chomping at the bit to get outside once the snow melts. And some people love to get as muddy as they can while out on the trails. But with a little thought this problem can be greatly reduced.

- **Try to be patient.** Stay off the trails if you can. If you are unsure if a trail is ready to be used, check it out with the commitment to turn back if you are doing too much damage. Or choose an alternative to trails. Spring is a great time to explore your community. Take a leisurely trip on local subdivision roads.

- **Choose low impact.** If you use the trails in several different ways, choose the method of travel that will cause the least amount of damage if you do run into some muddy sections.
- **Pick your trails carefully.** Use well-drained trails with lots of southern exposure. They typically dry out the quickest. If you just have to get muddy, please limit your activities to trails that are already thrashed. A little more damage probably won't make a big difference, but a trail in nice shape can be damaged for a season in a hurry.

Last May the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner ran this story about what to do in the spring when you're chomping at the bit to get outside while the trails are still muddy: <http://tinyurl.com/jfsq5b5>

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY COMING UP THE FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE

National Trails Day is happening June 4, but as of March 31 there were no National Trails Day events registered for Alaska. If you are interested in leading or organizing an event, visit www.nationaltrailsday.org for information on how to host an event, where to register an event, and how to subscribe for updates. National Trails Day is the country's largest celebration of trails. Events will take place in every state across the country and will include hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more.

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>

STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Statewide Alaska Nordic Skier (March issue has a few trail-related stories): <http://tinyurl.com/j5fzkh>
- Eagle Watch, State Parks (March): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatchcurrent.pdf>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Teach the kids about Alaska's last great Gold Rush trail: <http://tinyurl.com/jpd68w6>
- Craig Medred had several good stories of the Iditarod Trail Invitational
 - Near death on Iditarod Trail: <http://craigmedred.news/2016/03/06/near-death-on-itarod-trail/>
 - Lucky to be alive: <http://craigmedred.news/2016/03/07/lucky-to-be-alive/#more-9005>
 - Tim Hewitt sets new foot record on the Iditarod Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/hd7ekrb>
 - Iditarod season is over: <http://tinyurl.com/j89md33>
- Device gives submerged snowmachiners a fighting chance: <http://tinyurl.com/gwdjzya>
- Brothers plan Alaska-to-Mexico paddleboard adventure: <http://tinyurl.com/hydxspp>
- Wind warriors: A blustery trip across the Seward Peninsula: <http://tinyurl.com/z7ag6pr>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- This weird winter isn't the new normal. But that's on its way: <http://tinyurl.com/ja7d4wo>
- Not a Farewell Burn: <http://craigmedred.news/2016/03/05/not-a-farewell-burn/#more-8439>
- Five Alaska Campgrounds to Take the Kids: <http://tinyurl.com/jogydy3>
- In Amundsen's Footsteps: Expedition completes 700-mile Arctic journey: <http://tinyurl.com/hylobt6>

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- On the Trails: Odds and ends: <http://tinyurl.com/hpphafg>
- Juneau's Trail Mix is hiring for its 2016 Trail Crew: <https://juneautrails.org/employment/>
- Sitka's Trail Works announces Weekend Hikes schedule: www.sitkatrailworks.org/weekend-hikes/

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

PROP 4 IN ANCHORAGE ELECTION INCLUDES TRAIL PROJECTS

Several trail-related projects are included in Proposition 4 to be voted on in the Anchorage municipal election on April 5. Below are trail-related project descriptions from an Anchorage Park Foundation web page: <http://tinyurl.com/zy59mnv>

- **Fish Creek Trail Rehabilitation (\$175k)** Funds will be used to repair, resurface, and light the Fish Creek Trail. The municipal bond funds will be used to provide a 12% match to a \$1.5 million dollar Federal grant that will be used to pay for the trail rehab.
- **Coastal Trail Rehabilitation (\$400k)** Funds will be used to repair and armor the eroding shoreline along the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail.
- **Campbell Creek Trail Rehabilitation (\$650k)** Funds will be used to improve trailhead access as well as repair and resurface the trail. Municipal bond funds and an existing State of Alaska legislative grant are scheduled to pay for the repair and resurfacing of the trail.
- **Multi-Use Trail Bridge Safety Upgrades (\$400k)** There are 30 bridges throughout Anchorage Parks and Recreation Trails System, most of which are 40 years or older. Capital funds will be used to begin a ten year plan to repair and/or replace bridges as priorities are determined. Municipal funds will be used pay for this ongoing project.
- **Taku Lake Park Re-Development and Safety Upgrades (\$400k)** Funds will be used to improve the sight lines into the park to reduce vandalism, reconstruct a playground, install new fishing docks, improve park lighting, and expand the park's trail system. Funding sources for the improvement of Taku Lake Park are scheduled to include municipal bonds, state grants, and community donations.
- **Lake Otis and Campbell Creek Parking Improvements (\$300k)** Bond funds will be used to construct a new parking lot that will provide additional access to the Campbell Creek Trail and alleviate parking congestion for the popular playground at Campbell Creek Park.

For more information on the election and the projects:

- For a few bucks each, we can keep Anchorage parks and trails in good repair: <http://tinyurl.com/h5xja5l>
- Please Vote YES on Prop 4: Parks Bond: <http://tinyurl.com/htaakbc>

ALASKA HUTS TO HOLD FUNDRAISER, WORKSHOPS

Alaska Huts will be holding an Anchorage fundraiser in April and two workshops at its Kenai Peninsula Manitoba cabin and yurts in June.

"A Flannel Affair" will be held on Thursday, April 14, at the Tap Root Public House, 3300 Spenard Road, starting at 6:30pm. Cost for entry is \$10. The group bills the event as "an evening with friends, comfort food, beverages, and music to rock you by Anchorage's own, Sassafras. Put on your coziest cabin

casuals and no frills fireside garb! There'll be prizes for folks taking comfort to new fashion frontiers!"

The first hour is a chance for people to get to know Executive Director Tom Callahan, as well as the rest of the Alaska Huts crew. Dining, drinking, dancing and a silent auction will follow.

The mission of Alaska Huts is to include "Alaska's back country in a worldwide tradition of places in which hikers and skiers can travel hut to hut, and provide warm comfortable huts in inspiring settings to foster camaraderie and promote wilderness education and stewardship."

For more, see: www.alaskahuts.org/news/2016/3/6/alaska-huts-presents-a-flannel-affair

The two workshops are family focused. One is a family fun camp and the other is designed to teach outdoor essentials to parents with children 5 and younger.

- Manitoba Hut Family Fun Camp June 18-19: <http://www.alaskahuts.org/family-fun-camp/>
- Babes In The Woods June 3-5: <http://www.alaskahuts.org/babes-in-the-woods/>

COMMENTS DUE ON NANCY LAKE REC AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Comments are due by April 4 on the Intent-to-Adopt version of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan. You can submit comments online through the planning website (below) or email them to nlsrcomments@alaska.gov.

The comment period for the public review draft of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan (Plan) closed on July 12, 2013. Comments have been reviewed and an Issue Response Summary and a list of Recommended Revisions for the Plan have been developed. The Recommended Revisions document coupled with the Public Review Draft of the Plan constitute the final plan that the planning team intends to bring to the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources for adoption. The plan and related documents can be viewed at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/nancylk/planning.htm>

MAT-SU LANDFILL EXPANSION WORRIES TRAIL USERS

A planned expansion of the Mat-Su Borough landfill has trail users worried that some of the Crevasse Moraine trails will be closed and/or destroyed. However, borough officials say the trails aren't threatened, at least not for many, many years, and then only minimally. The Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission will have a public hearing on the issue on April 4 at 6pm in the borough assembly chambers.

Two local news outlets have covered the story:

- The Frontiersman newspaper: <http://tinyurl.com/zryh3ml>
- KTVA television station: <http://tinyurl.com/jhza19f>

In a Facebook post, Butch Shapiro, Solid Waste-Division Manager for the borough, assured trail user that the trails would be safe for now.

"In 2009-2010, a trail was closed to prep for cell 4. The landfill expansion will not touch the trail system, again, for more than 25 years until cell 8 is developed and then another trail, 50 years from now. Ultimately, though, when retired, the landfill cells will be reclaimed back into the trail system."

See the full post here: <http://tinyurl.com/hb2mswt> (Shapiro refers to the "Crevasse Moraine Trails Committee meetings," but meetings were actually for the Matanuska Greenbelt.) The post includes a map of the landfill with its planned cell development and the Crevasse-Moraine Trails involved. Another useful map can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/jlo9bk5>

Some of the confusion apparently came when a public notice was distributed to nearby residents that had a map without sufficient information. It made it appear as though a huge chunk of the Crevasse-Moraine Trails were being wiped out. The borough is now trying to get out all the information to ease the concerns of trail users. However, some trail users still want to have the trails zoned as a park in order to permanently save them.

KODIAK FILM FESTIVAL TO BE HELD APRIL 8

The Island Trails Network's Kodiak Outdoor Film Festival will be held Friday, April 8, at the Harbor Convention Center. This is Kodiak's premier showcase of local adventure/sports film talent, and draws a live audience of more than 300 people. The films highlight outdoor activities in and around Kodiak ranging from surfing to snowboarding, from hunting to spearfishing. The 2015 event drew a record 318 people at the Harbor Convention Center, one of Kodiak's largest venues. The festival serves as ITN's annual membership meeting and is an opportunity for members to meet and greet the ITN board and staff. A pizza and salad dinner is free with a current year membership, and the Best Western Kodiak Inn provides a no-host bar. For a taste of typical fare you can review the trailers from the last few years at <http://www.islandtrails.org/kodiak-outdoor-film-festival.html>.

NANCY LAKE RECREATION AREA CABINS REPLACED

In late January, ACC Dustin Knapp and maintenance workers Paul DiMaggio and Nick Allen completed the replacement of the fourth public-use cabin at Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. Cabins replaced include Lynx Lake #2 and #3 and Nancy Lake #1 and #2. All four 16x20-foot cabins are of the same design. They comfortably sleep four people and feature a storage loft. To make reservations, visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/cabins/>

(From Eagle Watch, the Alaska State Parks newsletter)

COME LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP CHUGACH STATE PARK TRAILS

Do you love hiking in Chugach State Park? Ever notice the trails are loved so much they need maintenance help? Two community projects, Alaska Trail Volunteers and the Chugach Fund are launching this summer to improve your trails. Come to a community meeting to learn how to be involved in supporting the park and trails you love so much. The meeting will be held Monday, April 18, 6-8pm REI Meeting Room (1200 W Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage).

COMMITTEE FORMED TO ADDRESS SUTTON AREA PROBLEMS

Do you use trails in the Sutton area? If so, the Jonesville/Slipper Lake Citizens Action Committee wants your input. The committee was formed by the Sutton Community Council. The purpose of the committee is to work with state and local government to address the problems the entire community has been facing at the Jonesville/Slipper Lake area. The group is looking for community members and community input to add to the discussion and planning for this valuable community resource.

See the committee's website here: <http://slipperlake.org>

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Notice of Adoption of the Chugach State Park Management Plan and Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan: <http://notice.alaska.gov/180430>
- Retail and recreation under threat in Anchorage warm weather winters: <http://tinyurl.com/gnohkav>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network *trails update*: <http://tinyurl.com/z9sz6s2>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Avalanche Prediction in Chugach Nat Forest: <http://tinyurl.com/h2432xh>
- Amid warm, snowless winters, Anchorage skiers ponder future of their sport: <http://tinyurl.com/hh6grdd>
- America's 20 Coolest Outdoor Towns (includes Valdez): <http://tinyurl.com/mxq6p5q>

- A California developer is buying up land in Seldovia, leaving some locals concerned (includes a trail aspect toward the end of the story): <http://tinyurl.com/jlljox5>
- April 27 Public Open House on the Updated Willow Lake Use Plan: <http://notice.alaska.gov/180836>
- Advisory board recommends denying Kachemak Bay helicopter permit: <http://tinyurl.com/gv2ralz>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

UAF COMMITTEE CONSIDERS WIDENING SKI TRAIL TO SMITH LAKE

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is considering a proposal to create easier access to Smith Lake for skiers.

The University Trails Club has proposed widening and rerouting an existing single-track trail, which is regularly packed by snowmachine, that extends from the lower portion of the Big Whizzy Trail to Smith Lake. The reroute portion would change where the trail enters Smith Lake. Currently, the trail enters the lake at a steep bank, which is difficult to negotiate in both directions. The proposed reroute would extend the trail farther along the lakeshore following an unmaintained social trail to a point that more gradually meets the lake. The club would also like to widen the entire route to about 10 to 15 feet wide in order to accommodate skate skiing.

Stan Justice, of the trails club, said the club wants to make Smith Lake more accessible, especially for beginners. The lake is popular with beginning skiers because it is flat and has groomed skate and classic trails. It has several access points. However, getting to Smith Lake is difficult for beginners and requires either hills, a long walk, or the single-track trail that ends in a steep bank, which is about three feet high.

(The single-track trail connects Smith Lake to the low point of the Big Whizzy Trail. Big Whizzy is one-way for most of its route, but two-way traffic is allowed between the single-track trail and the Big Whizzy access point across from the Sheep Creek parking lot. The access is signed.)

The trails club is willing to pay for the work to clear and reroute the trail, but several steps need to be taken first. Because the work would be done in a wetlands area a permit might be required from the Army Corp of Engineers. And more study is needed before the permit can even be applied for.

“The Army Corp of Engineers will not tell us the level of permit required until they see a detailed plan,” according to Mark Oldmixon, chairman of the North Campus Subcommittee (NCS). “This permit will determine the budget required as well.”

A project team will come up with a plan and check with the corps to determine which, if any, wetlands permits will be needed, according to Kara Axx, North Campus manager.

“After we have the drawings and a recommendation from the project team, the request will go back to the NCS followed by the UAF Master Planning Committee before being ultimately approved by the UAF Chancellor. When the project gets approved on all levels, construction will begin in late fall/early winter, weather dependent,” Axx wrote in an email.

According to Oldmixon, a “large majority of the committee is agreeable to this action,” but he added that there is still some debate over whether a skate lane is really needed.

“In summary, we want to improve access, but it won't be fast,” Oldmixon wrote in an email.

“Feedback on the trail width would be welcome. The current proposal is for skate lane width, 10-15 feet.”

Contact members of the subcommittee at: www.uaf.edu/mastplan/committee/subcommittees/north-campus/

MORE COMMENTS NEEDED FOR YANKOVICH BIKE PATH PROJECT

The Yankovich, Miller Hill bike/ped path and safety project is close to being eligible for federal funding, but it's not quite there yet.

People interested in seeing this project be completed should comment in support of Amendment #3 of the 2015-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which now includes the project. Earlier advocacy efforts helped get the project on that TIP amendment, but the amendment has not yet been approved. Comment by April 15 one of these ways:

- Visit this web page and use the comment box (scroll down when you get to the window): <http://fmats.us/2016/03/16/2015-2018-tip-amendment-3-is-available-for-public-comment/>
- Email: web@fmats.us
- Snail mail: Attn: FMATS, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, AK 99701
- Fax: (907) 459-6783
- You can also testify at the FMATS Policy Committee meeting: Wednesday, April 20, noon; Fairbanks City Hall Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street

This project would improve safety for drivers, bikers, runners, walkers, and roller-skiers along Yankovich and Miller Hill roads. As originally planned, the path would run around the north part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. A portion of it was finished by the state Department of Transportation and Public Works this past fall. The department, working with the university, built a new path and improved a portion of an older path. The path now runs from the roundabout at the university to Miller Hill Road (the path along Sheep Creek Road still continues past Miller Hill Road), up Miller Hill to Yankovich Road, and east on Yankovich, where it ends just across the road from the Large Animal Research Station (LARS).

The plans are to continue the path along Yankovich. The exact routing hasn't been decided, but it would connect to the already existing bike/pedestrian path along Farmer's Loop Road. However, state funds for the project have mostly dried up, so it must be eligible for federal funds in order to be finished.

If you would like to be alerted to other opportunities to comment please contact Eric Troyer (fbxtrails@gmail.com) or Erik Schoen (erik.schoen@gmail.com).

EASEMENTS GRANTED FOR PEARL CREEK AREA TRAILS

The message below is excerpted from an email sent to Pearl Creek Park Trails Users Group:

I wanted to let you know the good news that Marilyn Herreid and Teri Viereck have signed trail easements to the public for a trail that goes from Red Fox Drive to Herreid Drive. This very important trail section through private properties connects the Skarland/Skyline/Goldstream trails via the State-owned ski/sledding hill/gully above Red Fox to the Pearl Creek Trails/Skarland/UAF trails.

Neither easement is surveyed, so the route of the trail may change over time, as property uses change. What is defined is the beginning and the end of the trails, so that the public will always have non-motorized access through these parcels.

PLEASE WATCH FOR SPRING TRAIL RESTRICTIONS IN INTERIOR

Please be on the watch for springtime trail restrictions. Usually starting in late April and lasting through much of May, several trails in the Interior are closed to some or all trail use. These restrictions are set in

order to protect the trails when they are vulnerable as the ground thaws.

Two of the most high-profile trail areas that often have closures are the Chena River State Recreation Area and the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The state Division of Forestry maintains many logging roads, which are also used as trails. The division asks that people stay off the roads during breakup.

Please check these websites for trail closure updates.

- Chena River State Recreation Area: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/chena/>
- Alaska State Parks News: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>
- White Mountains NRA website: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/nlcs/white_mtns.html
- White Mountains NRA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BLMWhiteMountains/>

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Affordable public cabins make stunning White Mountains wilderness accessible: <http://tinyurl.com/zd5wd6m>
- Trek Over the Top: 153 snowmachiners hit trail from Tok to Dawson and back: <http://tinyurl.com/gv3oojo>
- Trip Report: Tanana River makes for icy ski and fat bike ride: <http://tinyurl.com/jt2hcs2>
- With the dogs on the trail, leading the way: <http://tinyurl.com/jsznn2s>
- Two free presentations on several Alaska national parks at the Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center coming up in April and May: <http://tinyurl.com/jcuz3qy>
- The UAF Trails Club has a new website: <http://uaftrailsclub.weebly.com>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

RECREATIONAL TRAILS AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE IN APRIL

Nominations are due April 4 for the Coalition for Recreational Trails Annual Achievement Awards.

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), a federation of national and regional trail-related organizations, presents the annual awards to recognize outstanding trail projects funded by the national Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

The awards are presented in Washington, D.C., during Great Outdoors Month in June each year as part of the coalition's ongoing effort to build awareness and appreciation of this highly successful program, which has greatly enhanced the quantity and quality of trail experiences available to the public. An awards ceremony will be held on Capitol Hill to honor the outstanding achievements.

As an additional benefit, American Trails makes a web page for each winning project. See the over 100 award pages created since 2003.

(From American Trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/awards/CRTawards.html>)

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

RECENT TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS/MAGAZINES

- American Trails (March): <http://tinyurl.com/j4hsxav>
 - Celebrate National Trails Day: June 4, 2016
 - President Obama calls for full funding of LWCF
 - Massachusetts town seeks to provide every home with access to a trail
 - Take a walk on England's 5,000-year-old Ridgeway
 - Transformed rail trail connects Bosnia and Croatia, unlocks tourist potential
 - and more...
- Conservation Volunteers International Program (March): <http://tinyurl.com/jlwckqb>
- Americans for Responsible Recreation Access (OHV group): <http://tinyurl.com/zv45f4x>

ADVOCACY

- Volunteer opportunity: Renovating walls and trails in Chanonat, France: <http://tinyurl.com/hsdcexp>
- Please ask Congress to support Physical Fitness: <http://tinyurl.com/h79e8rr>

GRANTS

- North Face Explore Fund (deadline April 5): <http://tinyurl.com/hkdfzn3>

STUDIES

- Are Outdoorsy People Nicer Than Indoorsy People?: <http://tinyurl.com/z9ydlhu>
- Introducing The Physical Activity Research Center: <http://tinyurl.com/jlqahxg>
- Fla. researchers evaluate connections between public transportation, trails: <http://tinyurl.com/hwqkymn>

TRAIL GUIDES

- 10 Great New Jersey Bike Trails To Help Get You Psyched For Cycling: <http://tinyurl.com/jq957zp>
- 5 of Nashville's most popular hiking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/jgh3mo8>
- 7 top trails in the Milwaukee area: <http://tinyurl.com/goxas8n>
- Indulge your inner desert rat with 4 western Arizona hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/zz4gnm8>
- 5 fun Utah horse trails to ride this summer: <https://www.ksl.com/?sid=39003454&nid=1288>

TRAILS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Our Reliance on Technology Makes the Backcountry More Dangerous: <http://tinyurl.com/jht4hov>
- California's Hiking Trails Just Got Safer Thanks to a Crowdsourced App: <http://tinyurl.com/jn2ptlm>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Breaking Down Barriers - Parks and Recreation Connecting with Public Health: <http://tinyurl.com/he2meb5>
- Parks: An Opportunity to Leverage Environmental Health: <http://tinyurl.com/zeocmqy>
- 14-Club Partnership Working To Create 750-Mile Arizona Peace Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/gtxohad>
- Long Lines, Packed Campsites And Busy Trails: Our Crowded National Parks: <http://tinyurl.com/j7xvdrc>
- Ten Springtime Outdoor Safety Tips: <http://tinyurl.com/zmsc4yo>
- 8 Ways to Inspire and Motivate Yourself to Go Hiking: <http://tinyurl.com/gugcpaw>
- What To Do When Lost In The Woods circa Forest Service 1946: <http://tinyurl.com/zp xp8je>

- 10 Terrific National Park Hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/jco6cv5>
- 5 Questions For Senator Wyden About The New Recreation Bill: <http://tinyurl.com/jx7d78n>
- Order Promotes Access To Public Lands For Under-Resourced Youth: <http://tinyurl.com/z4qk3w6>
- The New Golden Rule of Playing Outside: Place First: <http://tinyurl.com/zylgk3u>
- Group Completes Epic First Ski of the Hardrock 100: <http://tinyurl.com/zi2iacp>
- 1,450-Mile Developing Trail Network to Revitalize America's Industrial Heartland: <http://tinyurl.com/jugjeud>
- Pair tackles 59 national parks in 59 weeks: <http://tinyurl.com/jr8rwk8>

BUILDING TRAILS

- Book: "Great Trails: The definitive guide for the planning, designing, constructing, managing and maintaining Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails;" Download for free or purchase hard copy for \$30: <http://gt.nohvcc.org>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- Photos: New Zealand's hiking trails offer one spectacle after another: <http://tinyurl.com/zh66dqn>
- Google maps aims to let you walk the North Downs, from your sofa: <http://tinyurl.com/jkn3zxq>
- Ontario Trails bill would provide a single set of rules: <http://tinyurl.com/jflkkpl>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL:

- Norway Will Spend Almost \$1 Billion on New Bike Highways: <http://tinyurl.com/jocos8q>
- IMBA Conducts Press Conference to Announce New Plan for Wilderness: <http://tinyurl.com/hes3vxg>

The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference on the second 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. More info: office@alaska-trails.org

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