

ALASKA  
TRAILS

# NEWSLETTER

Nov  
2016

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

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### SUPPORTERS MAKE ALASKA TRAILS FALL FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

Thanks to all the businesses and individuals who donated to make the Alaska Trails Fall Fundraiser such a success. More than 60 supporters showed up to hear live music from Big Fat Buddha, see a presentation on Alaska Trails' work this last year, bid on wonderful trips, gear and prizes – all to raise money for Alaska Trails. The hard work of the Alaska Trails Board of Directors helped make the evening a wonderful success.

More than \$5,000 was raised and we hope to make it even bigger and better in years to come. Thanks to Brienne Keifer for her winning bid on the Alaska Airlines tickets. (We think she might be considering going some place warm!)

*(Photo: Brienne Keifer pondering how she will use her Alaska Airlines tickets; courtesy of Brienne.)*



**Thanks to all the donors to the  
Alaska Trails Fall Fundraiser:**

**ALASKA AIRLINES**

**Skinny Raven / New Sagaya / REI**

**Brian Looney / Jack Mosby / TREK Store**

**Chris Beck / The Hoarding Marmot / Harry Brod**

**Eagle River Nature Center / Surveyor's Exchange**

**The Bicycle Shop / Arctic Roadrunner / Paramount Cycles**

**McCarthy River Tours / Midnight Sun Brewing Company**

**Lucky #9 Jewelry / Black Cup / Agnew::Beck**

**Anchorage Yoga and Cycle / Mooses Tooth**

**Anne Brooks / Tim Remick Photography**

### JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT FUNDRAISING EVENT – TRAIL TALES

Please mark your calendar for our next event: Trail Tales – Celebrating Trails through Stories.

Funny and inspiring storytellers will share their tales of adventure – and mis-adventure, in the spirit of Arctic Entries. Proceeds will benefit the Chugach Park Fund and Alaska Trails.

The event will be held Thursday, December 1, at the 49th State Brewery in Anchorage. Doors open at 6:30, show runs 7-9pm.

## FEDERAL EMPLOYEES CAN DONATE THROUGH THE CFC

If you are a federal employee, you can donate to Alaska Trails through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Just use the "Search Charities" button to find us. The campaign, which includes many other worthy charitable organizations, runs from September 1 to December 15. The campaign can be accessed here: <http://www.alaskacfc.org>

## ALASKA TRAILS LINKS

- If you weren't able to join us at the Active Transportation Summit, you can view Mark Fenton's presentations and recommendations at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/active-transportation-summit.html>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show talked to newsletter editor Eric Troyer about his newsletter work and Fairbanks trails in the second half of this Fairbanks-based show: <http://tinyurl.com/ztxlsah>
- Check out our new Alaska Trail Stewards brochure, thanks to the team at the National Park Service, Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program: <http://tinyurl.com/zylz68j>
- Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Trails-707066126002590/>

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT DEADLINE DATES NEARING

Deadlines for the Recreational Trails Grant Program have changed and are coming up soon. The application due date is now November 1. Applications have been available since August 15.

The Recreational Trail Grant Program provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities. The program also provides funds for safety and educational programs. To learn more about the program, please visit the state's Recreational Trails Program page at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

### NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL PHOTO CONTEST DEADLINE COMING

American Trails sponsors an annual contest for photographs of designated National Recreation Trails (NRT) across the country. The contest provides awards in several categories and shows off entries (and previous winners) on the NRT website. The deadline for entries is December 15.

The goal is to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails. Contest judges look for good photos of trail users as well as special facilities, art on the trails, management issues, construction, and volunteers. They also want to see entries that cover the many types and uses of National Recreation Trails throughout America.

For more on the contest see: [www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/photocon.html](http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/photocon.html)

For a list of NRTs in Alaska, see: <http://tinyurl.com/h5bnf4>

### SURVEY TO COLLECT OHV INFO ON FAVORITE BLM RIDING AREAS

Now is your chance to recognize your favorite Bureau of Land Management OHV (off-highway vehicle) riding area, as well as the trails, management practices, and individuals who make that riding area great. These riding areas will be recognized on the national BLM website and will provide other OHV enthusiasts with the information needed to enjoy these great riding areas. This is a nationwide survey, so you can select areas outside of Alaska, too.

Use the survey to cast your ballot: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SZXRJC6>

*(From the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council)*

## STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Alaska Nordic Skier (Oct issue has trail-related stories): [www.anchoragenordicski.com/newsletter/](http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/newsletter/)

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- Grant will help fix hundreds of Iditarod Trail markers: <http://tinyurl.com/jev8op2>
- Iditarod National Historic Trail listed as one of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties: <http://tinyurl.com/hqdzm3o>
- Ready for winter? Better be if you plan to visit Denali Highway: <http://tinyurl.com/gqnv4e9>
- Proposed mine draws concerns from Iditarod community: <http://tinyurl.com/j9h3v84>
- To escape Election Day lunacy, head outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/hpbote3>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Revisiting Wildlife Hazards in Context: <http://tinyurl.com/jjo8bkm>

## SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Sitka Trail Works newsletter (September) available online: [www.sitkatrailworks.org/newsletter/](http://www.sitkatrailworks.org/newsletter/)

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Young Alaskan blazing the trail for diversity in the great outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/zyupwd4>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### MAJOR CHANGES MADE TO BIRCH HILL RECREATION AREA TRAILS

The trail system at Birch Hill Recreation Area in Fairbanks has seen some major changes this past summer, including a new trail, changes to the existing trails, and a new building.

A new trail has been built from the recreation area to the lodge at Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area on Fort Wainwright. Currently called the Sunnyside Trail because of its position on the south slope of Birch Hill, the trail is wide enough for skate and classic skiing. The upper portion of the trail is a loop, while the lower portion is a single lane. It will be open for skiing this winter and has already been used by some hikers, runners, and mountain bikers this fall.



The existing trails in the recreation area were also modified. Portions of trails were widened, hill crests were smoothed, and new connectors were built. The changes were due to two reasons. One is that the USSA (United States Ski and Snowboard Association) Distance National Championships will be held at the recreation area in March 2017. The changes

were needed for the officially sanctioned races to be held at the recreation area. The changes also help make the trails easier to groom with the ski club's PistenBully groomer. The club has had the machine for a couple of years and the groomers have been learning how to use it.

The new building, which is near the entrance of the recreation area, will house the ski club's

inventory of trail grooming equipment, which has grown over the years. A portion of the Warm Up Loop trail was lost to the new building, but a reroute allows the trail to remain a loop, although a bit shorter than before.

The work on the trails was done mainly by the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, while the equipment building, still being built, is a joint project of the ski club and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The borough owns the recreation area and the ski club grooms and otherwise takes care of the area's trails.

*(Photo of construction of Sunnyside Trail by John Estle.)*

## **DOG OWNER WORKSHOP TO FOCUS ON WILDLIFE, TRAPPING**

A workshop to help dog owners avoid and otherwise deal with wildlife and traps while out on the trails will be held Thursday, November 3, in Fairbanks.

"Sharing trails and safety around wildlife: A workshop for dog owners" will start at 5:30pm at Alaska Department of Fish and Game Regional Headquarters, 1300 College Road. Attendance costs \$10. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Email your name and contact information to [dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.vet](mailto:dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.vet).

The workshop, presented by ADF&G staff members, Mike Taras, Bob Hunter, and Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen, will cover a variety of topics, including hands-on practice with releasing traps and snares; recognizing and avoiding high-risk situations; how to react when encountering moose, wolves, and bears; and performing resuscitation and first aid on your injured dog.

## **SKYLINE RIDGE TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT MOVING FORWARD**

The Fairbanks Borough Parks and Recreation Department is working on improving the main trail that bisects Skyline Ridge Park, which is on the ridge to the north of Farmer's Loop Road.

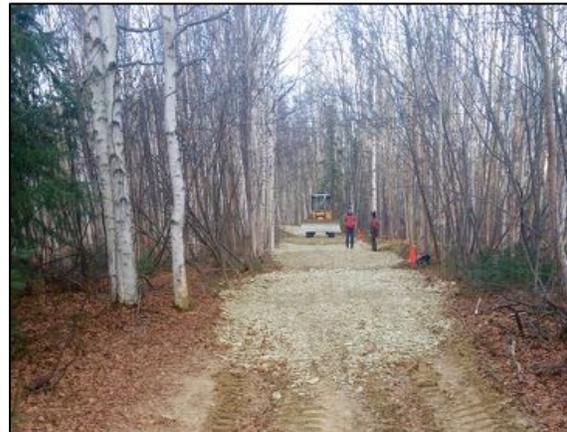
Work currently being done on a portion of the trail is funded by a Recreational Trails Program grant that the department applied for and received from the Alaska State Trails Program last year. Local contractors were hired to do the work. The department is applying for another grant to continue the project next year.

Skyline Ridge Park has several trails, most of which are informal single-track trails. The trail being improved is the main double-track trail that runs through the park. It has degraded over the years due to a combination of erosion, poor drainage, and use by heavy motorized vehicles. The trail has ruts and deep holes that form large ponds after snowmelt and heavy rains. Trail users have created braided trails around the ponds, which widen the footprint of the trails in the area.

Skyline Ridge Park is a 470-acre parcel located in the Farmers Loop area just north of Fairbanks. The property is composed of mixed vegetation with a variety of terrain that provides an outstanding landscape for trail-focused recreation. Several trails exist in the park. Work on developing the park started in the 1980s, when the land was owned by the federal Bureau of Land Management. The land was first transferred to the state before it was officially transferred to the borough on May 13, 2011.

See more pictures of the project at: <http://tinyurl.com/z63lqls>

*(Photo of Skyline Ridge Trail work courtesy of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department.)*



## FAIRBANKS TRAIL COORDINATOR TOM HANCOCK RETIRES

The Fairbanks Borough Trail Coordinator Tom Hancock is retiring from the borough the first week in November.

Hancock has been in the position with the parks and recreation department for about nine years. Before that he worked for 21 years for the borough in both the planning and land management departments. Bryant Wright will be taking over for Hancock. Wright had been a project coordinator for the department, including working on the Skyline Ridge Trail project improvement (see earlier story).

Hancock said he is most proud of helping the department “get a really good handle on the trail needs” of the borough’s Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. The plan covers more than 850 miles of trails, including most of the major trails and trail systems in the borough. Now that the needs are known, Hancock said, the borough needs to find financing to address them. He said the two biggest needs are “legalizing” and maintenance.

“There’s a huge maintenance backlog that needs to be done,” he said. “There are hundreds of miles of trails that need attention.”

As to legalizing trails, Hancock said many trails need to be surveyed and be given proper protections, such as easements.

After retirement Hancock plans to spend more time out on the trails and said he will still stay involved in local trails on some level.

Wright, who describes himself as a “regular trail user,” is wrapping up a master’s degree in Natural Resources Management from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. As part of that degree, Wright conducted research for the Bureau of Land Management’s recreation program.

“The research focused on interagency and regional planning for recreation resources, particularly those near Fairbanks and the Interior,” Wright wrote in an email. “I hoped this would provide some insight into the needs of Fairbanks recreationists. For me it definitely highlighted the great potential of the Borough trails program.”

As the borough trails coordinator, Wright will focus on trails included in the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan and making sure they are safe, legal, and accessible.

“There also exists a lot of opportunity to improve connectivity among existing trails,” Wright wrote. “Part of our focus will be to help make those connections that will help us get even more out of the vast trail system we have.”

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Trip report: A moose adventure at Ken's Pond: <http://tinyurl.com/j33xvpa>
- Pics of the new Sheep-Creek-to-Smith-Lake connector trail at UAF: <http://tinyurl.com/gtza693>
- Fairbanks Paddlers annual meeting with speaker Ned Rozell, Nov 4: <http://tinyurl.com/jzdvc6o>
- Trip report: Fall is a great time for Tolovana Hot Springs: <http://tinyurl.com/zchpon4>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: The Equinox Marathon and other extreme Fairbanks events: <http://tinyurl.com/ztxlsah>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### SOLDOTNA OPEN HOUSE TO BE HELD ON STATEWIDE BIKE/PED PLAN

An open house will be held Wednesday, November 2, in Soldotna to on a plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across the state. The open house will be held from 5-7pm at the Soldotna High

School Library, 425 W Marydale Avenue.

People will also be able to participate in this meeting via Facebook Live Stream (More details will be provided): <https://www.facebook.com/events/545283875667476/>

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in partnership with DOWL and Alta Planning + Design, is working to create the bicycle and pedestrian plan in order to improve safety, increase accessibility, and promote healthy lifestyles in Alaskan communities.

Some open houses have already been held in other communities and more are planned. The project team will work with communities across the state through 2018 to hear concerns and better understand community needs in order to develop achievable solutions that will increase access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improve safety across Alaska.

For further information or to sign up for our newsletter, visit our website at: [www.akbikeped.com](http://www.akbikeped.com)

## **AVALANCHE AWARENESS WORKSHOP TO BE HELD IN ANCHORAGE**

AARP Alaska and the Alaska Avalanche Information Center will hold a free Avalanche Awareness Education Workshop on Saturday, November 5. The event will be held from 11am to 3pm at the Z. J. Loussac Public Library, 3600 Denali Street, in Anchorage.

Alaska Community Snow Fest is a free avalanche awareness education workshop available to AARP members and the general public in an effort to reduce the incidents of unintentional injuries and deaths by avalanches.

At the event there will be video premieres of “Know Before You Go” and “Throttle Decisions,” presentations by professional snow safety experts, gear demonstrations, hands-on training workshops, games and activities.

Registration not required. For more information visit <http://spr.ly/61808Du20>

*(From AARP Facebook post)*

## **TONY KNOWLES COASTAL TRAIL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT BEGINS**

The second phase of a multi-year construction project to replace trail bridges on the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail began in mid-October. The construction schedule will depend on weather conditions. The bridges will re-open for winter trail use after installation, and surface paving will be completed in summer 2017.

The construction started with the Sisson Bridge (mile post 6.6). An unpaved detour route is available near the bridge. Construction also includes the Fish Creek Bridge (mile post 0.5). The detour route will be provided through adjacent neighborhoods (see detour map on website).

These closures require variable detours. Message signs will direct trail users to suggested detour routes for each bridge, as shown on maps. Detour maps will be posted at all trail intersections and on the [Parks & Recreation Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [project webpage](#).

The trail bridges were constructed in the 1980s and have withstood over 30 years of heavy trail use. Funds for the replacement of these bridges have been secured through the 2015 Park Bond.

*(From Anchorage Park Foundation email; photo of Fish Creek Bridge from Anchorage Parks and Recreation Facebook [page](#))*



## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- There's always Hope: [www.adn.com/outdoors-adventure/2016/10/03/theres-always-hope/](http://www.adn.com/outdoors-adventure/2016/10/03/theres-always-hope/)
- Police patrols downtown, on trails would make Anchorage safer (opinion): <http://tinyurl.com/hfs3ur3>
- BLM Campbell Creek Science Center recruiting for a year-long SCA Environmental Education Intern: <http://tinyurl.com/gpnmyzz>
- Cutting a new trail to a lonely destination on Kachemak Bay: <http://tinyurl.com/zqc7yj8>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network *trails update*: <http://tinyurl.com/he4nuel>
- Destination: Snowbird Hut: <http://tinyurl.com/gnxbnsm>
- Recruits sought for Chugach State Park Advisory Board (deadline Nov 23): <http://tinyurl.com/zswlpkb>
- Next training for Anchorage's Trail Watch is Nov. 2, 6:30pm: <http://tinyurl.com/o34rw7r>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### GROUPS LOBBIES FOR ENERGY BILL WITH TRAIL COMPONENTS

American Hiking Society has been busily working on numerous pieces of legislation with the US Congress and one of the bills that's been taking quite a bit of our time is the [North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act \(S.2012\)](#). Why is AHS working on a bill that 's primarily about energy? Because tucked into this large bill are items that are critically important to the entire hiking community: items such as permanent reauthorization of the [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#) and also funding to address the constant borrowing from Forest Service programs in order to pay for the increasing costs of wildfire suppression.

Read more: <https://americanhiking.org/blog/ahs-efforts-hill/>

### AMERICAN TRAILS PUTS OUT CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominations are due December 1 for the National and International Trails Awards Program, presented by American Trails. The awards recognize the tremendous contributions of volunteers, professionals, and other leaders who are working for the betterment of trails both nationally and internationally in both rural and urban settings.

National Trails Categories include: Lifetime Service, Trail Planning/Design (Two Levels), Trail Partnership, Trail Promotion and Education, Trails and the Arts, Trails for Health, Trail Accessibility, State Awards: Outstanding Trail Leaders.

International Trails Categories include: International Planning/Design, and International Partnership.

For more information see: <http://americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017-awards>

### AMERICAN TRAILS CALLS FOR 2017 SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

To help develop an exciting and motivating program for the 2017 International Trails Symposium, American Trails invites people to submit ideas for presentations in support of the symposium's theme, "Trails Take Flight: Connecting People, Places, and Possibilities." Proposals can be for national or international presentations. Deadline for submissions is December 9. To find out more see:

<http://americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2017-call>

## 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)

### RECENT TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS/MAGAZINES

- American Trails (Oct): <http://tinyurl.com/zveymdo>
  - *Hiking and lodging at Yosemite High Sierra camps*
  - *Paying for our National Parks*
  - *More safeguards against landowner liability*
  - *A U.S. and Mexican city want to build cross-border trail*
  - *and more...*
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (September): <http://tinyurl.com/za7omnj>
  - *Building This Single-Track Took Partnerships, Patience ... And Perspiration*
  - *The Next Generation of Great Trails Includes Features To Challenge And Improve Rider Skills*

### STUDIES

- Stressed? Science Says Take A Walk In The Woods: <http://tinyurl.com/hykkmsf>
- Differences in Spending by Local Trail Users: <http://trjournalonline.trb.org/doi/abs/10.3141/2598-07>
- Correlates of Trail Use for Recreation, Transportation on 5 Massachusetts Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/z6dggmx>

### TRAIL GUIDES

- Great urban hiking, biking trails in the Northeast: <http://tinyurl.com/h45nbt2>
- The 10 Best Fall Hiking Trails in the U.S.: <http://tinyurl.com/h33mnh6>
- The 15 Scariest Haunted Hiking Trails In The U.S.: <http://tinyurl.com/holdsxk>
- Five furious bike trails in Palm Beach County, Florida: <http://tinyurl.com/j2gwd27>
- 5 Best Haunted Hiking Trails (of California): <http://tinyurl.com/jy529z5>
- Haunted Hikes in Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Olympic: <http://tinyurl.com/jqvm8op>
- Take A Hike: 5 Midwestern Trails To Traverse: <http://tinyurl.com/zc6qogI>

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Vote on trail projects for the "Go the Extra Mile Fund": [www.michelobultra.com/theextramile.html](http://www.michelobultra.com/theextramile.html)
- "Alternative Break," a trails alternative to Spring Break for college students: <http://tinyurl.com/jk2f95I>
- The Newest Long Trails Crossing America: <http://tinyurl.com/gt3uj2o>
- Projects announced for first phase of Florida-wide trail system: <http://tinyurl.com/jgx94bw>
- 2016 Recreational Trails Program Annual Report: <http://tinyurl.com/jrk6vaa>
- Meet the Guys Collecting Trash on the Country's Longest Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ze8mxgd>
- Seattle Trails app launched to promote, improve trails: <http://tinyurl.com/j57rjyd>
- A Summer of Trail Maintenance with the Student Conservation Association: <http://tinyurl.com/jzr6dqe>

### INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- Your Top 8 Horse Trails: <http://www.fei.org/stories/your-top-8-horse-trails>

## SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Groups, Forest Service Bring Interactive Gaming to Outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/hdqeeds>
- Positive Outlook for Outdoor Recreation in 2017: <http://www.funoutdoors.com/Outlook2017>

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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)