

ALASKA  
TRAILS

# NEWSLETTER

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2016

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

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### JOIN US FOR A ROUSING EVENING OF 'TRAIL TALES'

Please join us for Trail Tales – Celebrating Trails through Stories on Thursday, December 1.

Funny and inspiring storytellers will share their 7-minute tales of adventure – and misadventure, in the spirit of Arctic Entries. Tickets are \$10 and are available at [www.alaska-trails.org/trailtales](http://www.alaska-trails.org/trailtales). Proceeds will benefit the Chugach Park Fund and Alaska Trails. Tickets

The event will be held at the 49th State Brewery in Anchorage. Doors open at 6:30, show runs 7-9pm. Food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the evening.

Featured storytellers include Lanie Fleischer, Blaine Smith, Betsi Oliver, Jen Aist, Reth Druir, Rebecca Sherman, Matias Saari and Harlow Robinson.

For more information, contact Steve Cleary at [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049) or email [steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org](mailto:steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org).



### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FOCUS OF NEW ALASKA TRAILS GRANT

Alaska Trails has been awarded a *Voices for Healthy Kids* grant to work on solidifying both the *Safe Routes to School Program* (SRTS) and the *Transportation Alternative Program* (TAP) funding as a consistent funding streams for active transportation at the state level.

*Voices for Healthy Kids* is a collaboration between the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation* and the *American Heart Association* that funds legislative campaigns around the country aimed at improving opportunities for physical activity, active transportation, and healthy food access. We pursued this funding because we see a need and opportunity to shore up consistent funding to support the development of active transportation taking place across Alaska.

TAP funding allocated this year in Alaska totaled more than \$19 million. TAP funding is a federal transportation allocation that gets passed through to the states, so this effort is not about getting the state to allocate more funding to active transportation.

We will work to assure that that money continues to benefit pedestrian, bicycle and trail infrastructure and programs. We hope you and your organization can join us in this important effort.

Our goals for the effort are two-fold:

- Codify the SRTS program in state law so that it can continue to benefit kids around the state.
- Assure that TAP funds will continue to be used in the manner that they were designed.

Without this legislative effort from active transportation advocates and allies, the future TAP funds could simply be rolled into the general transportation budget. We want to assure that the funding will continue to go the projects and programs that benefit our shared goals of improving active



transportation, safe routes to school, and physical activity in Alaska.

We are in the beginning stages of this effort, but we want your help. Here are ways we'd like for individuals and organizations to get involved:

- Joining the coalition
- Mobilizing grassroots support
- Advocating on behalf of active transportation to your state legislators

Alaska Trails Executive Director Steve Cleary is traveling to Minneapolis in early December for a training specific to this grant. Soon after, he will be setting up a meeting to provide more details to stakeholders about this exciting work.

If you would like to join the coalition or find out more please contact Steve (907/334-8049; [steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org](mailto:steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org)).

*(Active transportation photo courtesy of Wikimedia Foundation.)*

## SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Alaska Trails and the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) co-sponsored the first Active Transportation Summit in Anchorage on October 11. The summit featured nationally recognized engineer and active transportation expert Mark Fenton. As keynote speaker and summit leader, Fenton used his knowledge and training he has developed over decades of work in the transportation field. He also addressed the Chamber of Commerce, Alaska DOT and a leadership breakfast of elected officials and other decision-makers.

Alaska Trails has used its statewide trails conference and other forums to highlight the health benefits of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including trails. This summit built on those goals. Alaska Trails will continue to build on this success through the **Voices for Healthy Kids** grant it was recently awarded for work on the Safe Routes to School program (see story above).

## 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 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>

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Steve Cleary, Executive Director

### Volunteers Highlight the Year

2016 has been a wonderful year of volunteer trail work. That is thanks to lots of partners and scores of volunteers. Their hard work and dedication has yielded substantial results on the ground – detailed below – but it has also laid a firm foundation for the



Alaska Trail Stewards program. With the help of the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program –

Alaska Trails is developing a plan to make the program sustainable and expand it to other partners and land managers.

The Alaska Trail Stewards, our new name for this great program, were out in force in Chugach State Park this summer. The volunteers worked for a total of 600 hours and rehabbed roughly 1,000 feet of trails. Six hundred hours of volunteer time multiplied by the current volunteer rate of \$27.51/hours equals \$16,506. With a volunteer force of between 20 and 30 volunteers each of the project days, the volunteers were able to construct or rebuild more than 200 feet of trail each day. This is with only one CSP employee serving as a supervisor. If that same supervisor would spend a day supervising his/her trail crew of five paid employees, they would expect to complete 100 feet of trail. Thus, one supervisor with the right volunteers can double the output with no other employees on the job. This is an attractive metric to land managers who are continually short of funding but also wary of taking on volunteers.

The Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR) completed phase one of the Mirror Lake singletrack trails. Ptarmigan Trails was hired to use their machines to construct the base of the trail – with an amazing array of volunteers following to finish the trail by hand. Most every Wednesday evening

through autumn (and rain) and lots of weekends, CMBR volunteers were using tools from the Alaska Trails tool trailer to complete these wonderful new trails. Nearly 400 volunteers hours were logged and the work didn't begin until late August! In addition, the volunteer leaders at CMBR have been working with the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Rec Department to make sure the trails are safe, signed and properly covered by insurance. These finer details are not as glamorous as getting your hands dirty but are an important part of completing a project.

The Chugach Trail Volunteers – a subset of the Alaska Trail Stewards – hit the backcountry hard this summer. From the Turnagain Arm Trail and McHugh Peak Trail, to the East Fork Eklutna River Trail and the Bird Creek Trail the CTV volunteers worked 192 hours and cleared 15 miles of trail. The entire Bird Creek Trail is now clear of deadfall, for the first time in years. That 192 hours equals five weeks of staff time and is a real boost to park maintenance.

*Photo by Mike Downs: Trail crew on the Middle Fork Trail this past summer.*



Alaska Trails is working to learn from these successes to craft a program that can keep harnessing the power of these committed volunteers – and volunteers yet to come.

Happy Trails,  
Steve Cleary

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### 2016 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

The Recreational Trails Program has awarded matching funds for 32 trail projects in Alaska this year, with many projects underway or already completed. These are reimbursable, grant-funded projects happening throughout the state between 2016 and 2018. The total allocated for these projects is nearly \$1.3 million.

Two statewide grants were awarded to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. One for Alaska State Park Trail Guide Videos and one for Program Administrative Allowances to run the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). (See below)

Grants were awarded to 30 projects in several areas around the state including in Anchorage (4), the Mat-Su Valley (5), the Interior (8), the Southeast (6), and the Kenai Peninsula (7). For a description of local projects chosen to receive grants, see the Interior, Southcentral, and Southeast region news later in this newsletter.

The trails program is managed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and receives its funding for trails projects from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

For more information about the Recreational Trails Program, please visit the program's website at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>, or contact Darcy B. Harris, the Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator, (phone: 907/269-8699; email: [darcy.harris@alaska.gov](mailto:darcy.harris@alaska.gov)).

#### STATEWIDE RTP GRANTS

##### **DPOR, Interpretation and Education Section, Alaska State Park Trail Guide Videos: \$39,905**

This project is in the process of creating video guides for three different trails-Angel Rocks Trail and Granite Tors Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area, and Kesugi Ridge Trail in Denali State Park. The guides include safety information (including proper planning and preparation, and gear), trail etiquette, trail-specific tips, and brief interpretive messages. The video guides are being created in digital format to facilitate distribution and will be available to the public at no cost.

##### **DPOR, Alaska Trails Program Administrative Allowance: \$106,955**

This grant will cover expenditures for administering the RTP. These costs include paying the wages of administrative and accounting staff for billings, reimbursements, and accounting needs. This grant also pays for expenses associated with the federally required Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board to attend their annual meeting in Anchorage.

### WORKSHOP PLANNED FOR NEW DENALI PARK TRAILS STRATEGY

The National Park Service will host a workshop to discuss progress on the Denali Trails Strategy at 6pm on December 13 at the Tri-Valley Community Library in Healy.

This is the second in a series of meetings to work toward building a collaborative document that will guide trail management in Denali National Park and Preserve. The Denali Trails Strategy will not be a decision or compliance document, but will help inform trails policies and plans in the future.

The goal of this working meeting is to gather information



from the public on what they would like to see included in the Denali Trails Strategy. The agenda will include:

- Update on the why the park has decided to pursue a trails strategy, and the progress so far.
- Planning exercises that will allow individuals to provide information that is important to include in the Denali Trails Strategy. Our focus at this meeting will be the entrance area (Healy to McKinley Village along the Parks Hwy and Mile Post 0-15 of the Park Road).
- The Denali Trails Strategy team will answer questions at the end of the meeting.

For more information, questions or directions contact Emily Buhr, Outdoor Recreation Planner (907/683-6242; [Emily\\_Buhr@nps.gov](mailto:Emily_Buhr@nps.gov)).

*(From Denali National Park and Preserve press release; Photo: Montana Troyer on the Savage Alpine Trail in Denali National Park; by Corrine Leistikow.)*

## 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.

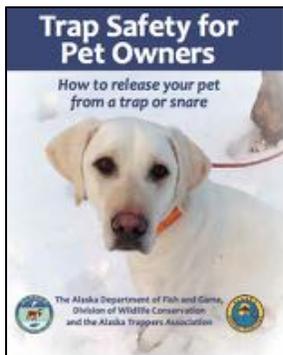
The goal is to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails. Contest judges look for good photos of trail users as well as special facilities, art on the trails, management issues, construction, and volunteers. They also want to see entries that cover 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/h5bwnf4>

## RESOURCES HELP REDUCE PET/TRAPPING CONFLICTS

Trapping season is here, so trail users who let their dogs run loose should make sure they know some basic information about traps and trap lines. A Pamphlet and videos are available.



**PAMPHLET:** A pocket-sized pamphlet titled "Trap Safety for Pet Owners" describes the types of traps and snares that may be encountered and provides illustrated instructions on how to free pets swiftly and safely. It is produced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Alaska Trappers Association (ATA). Copies are available free of charge at department offices, or may be viewed on the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/m6oulhk>. More information, including video footage featuring trap removal instructions, is found on the department's website at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) (see "Sharing the Trails" under the "Hunting > Trapping" dropdown menu), and on the ATA website ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).

**VIDEO:** The ATA also sells a 30-minute video, "Sharing Alaska's Trails," that includes information such as how to know if you are on a trap line, trap line safety, the physics of handling and opening traps and snares, and tips for first-aid for pets accidentally caught in traps. The video doesn't promote trapping, but deals with the practicalities of sharing the trails. A three-minute excerpt of the DVD can be found on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ)). To order a copy of the DVD check the ATA store ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).

Most trapping seasons run from November 1 to the end of February, but the season for a few species lasts longer. Wolf traps could be active well into April.

## 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 website at: <http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov/> . For a brief overview of how the weather service's hydrologic program works in the state, see the web-guide slideshow at: <http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov/pubs/Presentations/boaterwebguide.pdf>

## FORAKER GROUP OFFERS CLASSES FOR NON-PROFITS STATEWIDE

The Foraker Group, which is dedicated to strengthening Alaska's non-profits, offers classes about the proper workings of non-profit groups, which include many trail and trail user groups. If you are a member or employee of a non-profit group consider taking one of the classes, which are offered in several communities and statewide by teleconference. For more information visit the Foraker Group website ([www.forakergroup.org/](http://www.forakergroup.org/)) or call 907/743-1200 or (toll free) 877/834-5003.



## TRAIL EASEMENT MIGHT LOWER YOUR PROPERTY TAX

If you've got a recreational trail running across your property that is open to the public, you may qualify for a reduced property tax.

State law requires that land subject to a public recreational use easement (which can include trails) must be assessed at its true value. This recognizes that such easements restrict what a landowner can do with the property subject to the easement. (See AS 29.45.062 and AS 34.17.100. Find Alaska Statutes at [www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folio.asp](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folio.asp).)

However, the land or trail in question must have a legal easement. Granting an easement to the state is free and fairly easily. Download the two-page "Public Recreation Easement" form at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/forms/>. The link for the PDF document is about halfway down the page under "Land Forms." Granting the easement will also give the landowner tort and liability immunity (AS 34.17.055).

If you think you may qualify for a property tax reduction due to this law, contact your local government's Assessing Department.

## STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Eagle Watch, State Parks (October): <http://tinyurl.com/goyfg3x>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Summer public use cabins (they're open in winter): <http://tinyurl.com/of2mzog>
- Alaska State Park passes for 2017 are now available; starting Jan 1 the family two-pass discount will no longer be available: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/Passes.cfm>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- New ShoreZone project grants access to Alaska coastal information: <http://tinyurl.com/jx9taox>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### ITS FATE UNCERTAIN, KODIAK'S TERMINATION POINT GOES TO VOTE

The fate of one of Kodiak's favorite hiking destinations will be determined this Thursday, December 1.

On that night, at its regular meeting, Kodiak Island Borough (KIB) Assembly will vote on the final terms of a conservation easement that affects Termination Point. The easement would provide protection from logging, as well as grant-free and permanent public access to the point and over one thousand acres of old-growth timber.

Termination Point was identified for public access in the 2012 KIB Trails Master Plan as the *highest priority in the Kodiak road system for public acquisition*. This is our one, and quite possibly only, chance to make that happen. If the measure does not pass, the lands could be logged within a few years.

The Island Trails Network has been following this issue closely and has published a web page on its site with facts and common misconceptions about the proposal. See the web page here:

<http://tinyurl.com/zskulvj>

The regular meeting will be held Thursday, Dec 1, at 6:30 pm at the Assembly Chambers. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Those not able to attend the meeting but wishing to comment may submit written testimony to [clerks@kodiakak.us](mailto:clerks@kodiakak.us).

We need our elected officials to understand the extraordinary recreational value of Termination Point and Long Island to the Kodiak community. Please make your voice heard at one or preferably both of these meetings, and thank you for supporting Kodiak's trails.

*(From an Island Trails Network email; location graphic from Island Trails Network)*



### 2016 RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAM GRANTS

Grants for the following projects have been tentatively awarded from the Recreational Trail Program.

#### ANCHORAGE AREA

##### **DPOR, Chugach State Park, Trail Maintenance Equipment: \$23,140**

DPOR purchased a specialized, hydraulic brushing attachment to improve safety on, and conditions of, both motorized and non-motorized trails in Chugach State Park. This attachment (ETTRRA Raptor Boom Mower w/ 36" Flail Head) is highly specialized and will work with Chugach State Parks' existing Skid Steer.

##### **Anchorage Park Foundation, Rilke Schule Trail Connection to Meadow Park: \$33,782**

The Anchorage Park Foundation, in support of the Rilke Schule Trail Connection Project, has built 1200 feet of soft-surface, 5-foot wide gravel trail, connecting the newly constructed school to adjacent Meadow Park municipal parkland.

##### **Anchorage Park Foundation, Improvements at Jodhpur Motocross Trail: \$51,105**

The Anchorage Park Foundation will make significant improvements to the Jodhpur Motocross trails and riding area in Anchorage. Improvements will include replacing old, and broken safety-fencing with updated, standardized fencing, adding rule and wayfinding/orientation signs, making access driveway repairs, and building earth ramps for loading and unloading riding equipment.

**Alaska Trails Inc., Mirror Lake Singletrack-Phase 1: \$50,000**

Alaska Trails Inc. and the Chugach Mountain Bike Riders are collaborating to design and build 3 miles of designed use, single-track mountain biking trails. The trails will be located on the Mirror Lake and Edmonds Lake Municipal Park Land in Chugiak.

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA VALLEY**

**DPOR, Denali State Park, Curry Ridge Trail Phase II: \$49,920**

This project is Phase II of a multi-phase trail project and constructed approximately 1.5 miles of new trail as part of the South Denali Visitor Center Complex project. The new trail alignment began at the terminus of the recently constructed Phase I trail near the Curry Ridge tree line.

**Mat-Su Ski Club, Ski Trail Grooming Equipment: \$49,641**

The Mat-Su Ski Club purchased an Argo Centaur 954DT, all-terrain vehicle with modifications for winter ski-trail grooming that will be used by the Ski Club's trained volunteers to groom ski trails for cross-country skiing and non-motorized trail users at Independence Mine, Archangel Road, and Government Peak Recreation Area.

**Willow Trails Committee, Windsock Trail Upgrade: \$14,560**

This project developed a durable trail tread, to ATV standards for multi-use recreational trail activities, on the existing Windsock trail.

**Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District, YCC Denali State Park: \$6,851**

The Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District's (USSWCD) YCC, in partnership with Denali State Park worked four days hardening the trail on the Little Coal Creek trail. This project served as work and skill-building experience for the YCC participants and helped fix a trail in need of tread repair.

**Great Land Trust, Wasilla Creek Wetlands, Refuge Trail: \$36,623**

This project will complete the Wasilla Creek Wetlands- Palmer Hay Flats Refuge access project. Capital improvements to be completed using this funding include, interpretive signs and a kiosk, a gravel parking area to fit 5-10 cars at the Swan Lake Trailhead, two 6'x8' pullouts along the Wasilla Creek boardwalk so that people using wheelchairs or families with strollers can turn around or let people pass with ease, finishing work will include a bull rail for walking stability on two elevated boardwalks that were built last season, and a bench at each of the viewing platforms.

**KENAI PENINSULA**

**DPOR, Kachemak Bay State Park: Saddle Trail Re-Route Phase II: \$50,000**

This project will continue from Phase 1 re-aligning the trail/tread and corridor of the Saddle Trail from its present location. The trail alignment will be cleared, root wads removed, and new tread created to correct drainage and erosion problems. The project will also provide improved access, reduce grades and improve views.

**DPOR, Kachemak Bay State Park, Moose Valley /Poot Peak: \$49,991**

The Moose Valley/Poot Peak Trail Restoration project will restore portions of the Moose Valley and Poot Peak Trails in Kachemak Bay, near Homer, Alaska. The project will clear and brush exiting

corridors to improve blocked access, reshape existing tread, re-align and install trail markers to improve access, safety, and correct drainage problems.

**DPOR, Caines Head SRA: Tonsina Section: \$48,305**

This project focused on rehabilitating and upgrading the first 2.3-mile section of the Caines Head Trail at Tonsina point, near Seward Alaska, that connects park users to two public-use cabins. Work consisted of building several new sections of boardwalk, as well as rehabilitating some existing boardwalk sections that have settled and were sloping downhill. Tread work improved drainage along the trail, and gravel fill was brought in to harden one section of trail near a popular day use area and campground. This project was complete Fall 2016.

**DPOR, Interpretation and Education Section, Kachemak Bay State Park Orientation Panels: \$12,721**

Two outdated interpretive panels located at the top of Ramp 2 at the Homer small boat harbor will be replaced with two new panels that highlight the trails and amenities of Kachemak Bay State Park. This project will effectively promote safety and orient visitors to the park's trails system and overnight options that are open to the public such as campsites and public use cabins.

**Kachemak Nordic Ski Club, Trail Grooming Equipment, \$15,244**

The Kachemak Nordic Ski Club bought a new, tracked, ATV and mower for winter grooming and summer repair of the McNeil - Eveline Ski Trail system. The Eveline State Recreation Site is managed by KNSC through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

**Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies, Interpretive Trails Improvement: \$16,068**

This project replaces a 20' deteriorating bridge that crosses a small tributary to Bridge Creek at the end of the Moose Meander Trail on the Carl E. Wynn Nature Center trail system in Homer, Alaska. A stronger, safer 30' bridge will be installed and will include a total of 38 feet of trail right-of-way clearing and brushing on either side of the bridge to make the approach and crossing safer and easier for hikers of all abilities. The project includes the design and installation of a 24" X 36" interpretive sign informing users of the importance of the Bridge Creek Watershed and the role that watersheds play in the health of the ecosystem and local communities.

**Tsalteshi Trails, Single-Track Mountain Bike Trail Soldotna: Project: \$50,000**

The Tsalteshi Trails Association constructed a single-track "flow" bike trail extending from Skyview Middle School on the south to Kalifornsky Beach road on the north, near Soldotna, Alaska. The 2.5-mile trail generally follows the existing, cleared, snow-shoe trail corridor and utilizes terrain contours for an exciting, sustainable bike trail averaging an 8% grade on all steep sections. All crossings of ski trails are at uphill or flat sections of main trails and are well marked and highly visible.

**CORDOVA**

**USFS Chugach National Forest, Eyak River Trail Reconstruction Project: \$37,007**

This project is in the process of repairing .5 miles of existing Eyak River Trail in Cordova, Alaska. The first 0.3 miles require the repair of trail structures to control and span water flowing over and down the trail tread which is causing soil movement and sedimentation into Eyak River. Another 0.2 miles

of trail from mile post 1.3 to 1.5 requires reconstructing an existing Step and Run boardwalk, split log (native sawn trees on site) corduroy through wetlands (muskeg).

## TRAIL CREW LEADER SOUGHT FOR CHUGACH STATE PARK

Chugach State Park is looking to hire trail crew leader. The position is a permanent seasonal, with a typical season running March through October. It's a trails based position with a heavy leadership component. This person will lead the park's seasonal crew in the summer and help support other park projects in the shoulder seasons (trails, cabin construction, project planning, etc.). Basic trails and leadership experience a must and the position is open to Alaska residents only. The opening will close December 6. To apply and for more information see: <http://tinyurl.com/z2t47ay>

*(From Joe Hall, Chugach State Park specialist; photo courtesy of Chugach State Park)*



## MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation is seeking new board members beginning in 2017. Take an opportunity to learn more about our work on our website ([www.matsutrails.org](http://www.matsutrails.org)) and download an application at <https://www.scribd.com/document/331088515/MSTPF-Board-Application>

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

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Girdwood Nordic Ski Club survey on Girdwood winter trail use: <http://tinyurl.com/o9x9hyv>
- Anchorage launches sophisticated trip-planning tool (trails included): <http://tinyurl.com/jtsfk84>
- Trail conditions in Southcentral Alaska (interactive map): <http://tinyurl.com/zb7ejac>
- 12 peaks, 32 miles, 21,000 feet of climbing? All in a day's work for these Alaskans: <http://tinyurl.com/gp59ff6>
- How to stay safe when using Anchorage's trails: <http://tinyurl.com/go3p9jr>
- When coaxing a 3-year-old Alaska girl to the mountaintop, M&M's don't hurt: <http://tinyurl.com/zj7xgeh>
- Running Into Danger on an Alaskan Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/zxsxns6>
- The Best Cities for Outdoor Enthusiasts in 2016 (includes Anchorage): <http://tinyurl.com/hkytr9w>
- Community members band together to improve Fish Creek Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/hbv6shp>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### 2016 RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAM GRANTS

Grants for the following projects have been tentatively awarded from the Recreational Trail Program.

#### DELTA JUNCTION AREA

##### **Delta Junction Trails Association, Bluff Cabin Trail Restoration Phase 1: \$100,000**

Phase 1 consists of beginning the DNR process to amend the recreational trail easement to exclude vehicles greater than 1,500lbs and to correct easement alignment on bluff Cabin Trail in delta

Junction. This step will ensure sustainability of trail work accomplished. The contractor will apply a crowned cap of pit-run/D1 gravels, over geo-fabric, to the damaged sections in the first 1.34 miles (using the existing alignment this provides a long-term, sustainable fix), perform a trail assessment and prescription on the Bluff Cabin Lake (2.0 miles) and Bluff Cabin Slough (1.6 miles) sections of the trail.

## **FAIRBANKS AREA**

### **Fairbanks North Star Borough, Trail Systems Enhancement Equipment: \$37,043**

The Fairbanks North Star Borough purchased a power-arm, brush-mowing attachment (boom mower) for the FNSB-owned Holder C270 Narrow Track Articulating Utility Tractor. The boom mower will be coupled with the specialized utility tractor to improve trail access and conditions on public, multi-use trail systems, pedestrian walkways, and bike paths within Chena Lake Recreation Area, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, Birch Hill Recreation Area, Isberg Recreation Area, and Skyline Ridge Park.

## **CHENA RIVER STATE RECREATION AREA**

### **DPOR, Chena River SRA, Fairbanks: Mastadon Trail Construction: \$50,000**

This project constructed 3 miles of new trail at 38.6 mile Chena Hot Springs Road (Mastadon Trailhead) using best management practices including full bench construction, sustainable grade, curvilinear alignment, grade reversals, and outslope.

### **DPOR, Chena River SRA, Fairbanks: Mastodon Trail Hardening/Clearing: \$47,278**

This project hardened and repaired sections of the first 6 miles of Mastodon Trail in Fairbanks, and improved and stabilized the remaining 6 miles to the public use cabin so that equipment can be used in those repair efforts.

### **DPOR, Chena River SRA, Fairbanks: Stiles Creek Trail Extension and Construction: \$50,000**

This project repaired 200 rolling grade dips to function correctly to provide positive drainage on Stiles Creek Trail in Fairbanks. The project hardened a 1000-foot section of the trail, and cleared and repaired 15 miles of damaged and rutted trail.

### **DPOR, Chena River SRA, Fairbanks: Northern Area Training and Assessment: \$13,311**

The DPOR Northern area trail crew was hired, the training was set up and prepared, and trail projects were prioritized. The training included ATV training, chain saw training, policy and procedures training, and best management practices for trail construction training.

### **DPOR, Chena River SRA, Fairbanks: Angel Creek Hillside Bridge Repairs: \$24,190**

This project replaced ramps and installed handrails for three bridge approaches on the Angel Creek Trail in Fairbanks, to make them safe (prevent accidental falls), and meet building code standards. The ramps were replaced on existing footings and embankments and improved trail surfaces.

## **TOK AREA**

### **DPOR, Eagle Trail, Tok Region: \$35,471**

The Eagle Trail project removed and replaced an existing wooden boardwalk and 20'x3' staircase and 18 numbered wayfinding posts along the Eagle Trail located within Eagle Trail State Recreation Site south of the Tok Highway cut off, Alaska.

## FALL 2016 FMATS NEWSLETTER HAS TRAIL-RELATED NEWS

Below are highlights from the Fall 2016 edition of the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS) newsletter:

### 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The 2017 - 2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is now available for public comment. The comment period ends on December 10, 2016. To view the program and leave a comment, visit <http://fmats.us/2016/11/10/2017-2020-tip-comment/>

### Public Participation Plan (PPP)

This plan defines a process for providing the public measurable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process. The comment period ends on December 26, 2016.

To view the plan and submit comments, visit <http://fmats.us/2016/11/10/comment-now-on-the-public-participation-plan/>

### Project Updates

The Birch Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility project will be advertised in early 2017.

### Transportation Alternative Program

The next round of the FMATS TAP Program will include funding up to \$929,276. The FMATS application and evaluation process are currently being revised to be more comprehensive and with a more specific evaluation criteria. FMATS expects to release the program late this winter for eligible agencies to apply for the available funding. There is a 9.03% sponsor match.

To view last years program, visit <http://fmats.us/tap/>

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

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

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- Group tackles 28-mile Nordic skate from Tolovana to Minto on icy river: <http://tinyurl.com/jdq589b>
- Tolovana to Minto, on skates: <http://tinyurl.com/o5m2lpo>
- Panel restores Native names to 2 Interior streams: <http://tinyurl.com/z5rt2oz>
- To avoid winter blues, get outside: Fairbanks area offers abundant outdoor recreation opportunities: <http://tinyurl.com/grxc5vw>
- New Interior race gives mushers a chance to qualify for Iditarod, Quest: <http://tinyurl.com/h8o7lvr>
- Man hikes Yukon Quest Trail from Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Facebook page: <http://tinyurl.com/hnzxx58>
- The skating trail at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area has been cleared: <http://tinyurl.com/z5sw72b>

## SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

### 2016 RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAM GRANTS

Grants for the following projects have been tentatively awarded from the Recreational Trail Program.

#### HAINES

**DPOR, Southeast, Haines: Battery Point Trail Hardening Phase II: \$28,678**

This project involves continued trail hardening and a new trail alignment along mile 0.4 to 0.9 mile of the Battery Point Trail located in the Chilkat State Park. Trail hardening techniques include causeway and turnpike installation with the use of imported gravel. The gravel will be dispersed along the trail by mechanized wheelbarrows providing a sustainable tread.

**Takshanuk Watershed Council, Jones Point Trail Upgrade: \$15,125**

The Takshanuk Watershed Council is improving its 50-acre conservation property located in Haines, AK along the Chilkat River. They are upgrading .12 miles of trail, reconstructing 0.1 miles of existing and damaged trail, reconstructing 0.17 acres of trailhead, and installing an interpretive sign at the existing trailhead. The Haines Borough Comprehensive Plan identifies a path through this property designated as a nature trail. These enhancements greatly improve recreation opportunities on the property and will improve access to the over 2.7 miles of inter-connecting trails along the Chilkat River.

#### JUNEAU

**DPOR, Southeast, Juneau: Point Bridget Trail Restoration Phase II: \$49,983**

Point Bridget Trail Restoration Phase II continued the work from Phase I. DPOR built lumber and gravel staircases, with long run and minimal and consistent rise, to ensure steep grade stretches are safe and comfortable for hikers and safe and passable for all winter use.

**DPOR, Southeast, Juneau, Granite Creek Trail Improvements: \$50,067**

DPOR will improve and restore several sections of the Granite Creek Trail using lumber and rock to restore trail grade and slope, address sloughing and erosion issues, and facilitate better drainage.

**Sitka Trail Works, Mosquito Cove Trail Repair: \$39,771**

The project repairs storm damage from water erosion on the Mosquito Cove hiking trail using labor provided by a Trail Works crew, Student Conservation Association, Alaska State Park Juneau office staff, and U.S.F.S. trail crewmembers. Repairs will be made to trail tread using gravel and trees cleared to create a more sustainable trail.

### COMMENTS SOUGHT ON SITKA'S CROSS TRAIL SYSTEM PROJECT

Sitka Trail Works, in partnership with the City and Borough of Sitka, is planning Phase 6 improvements to the Sitka Cross Trail system. A public meeting on the project was held on November 29, but public comments are still being taken

The Phase 6 project will build a new multiuse component of the Cross Trail system extending from the Harbor Mountain Road to Starrigavan. Public input will be a major factor in determining the final



trail alignment.

Questions about the project may be directed to Lynne Brandon, Sitka Trail Works, (907) 747-7244, trail@gci.net. Please send an email or written comments may be mailed to Sitka Trail Works at 801 Halibut Point Rd; Sitka, Alaska 99835. Comments need to be received by December 14.

(From Sitka Trailworks [Facebook page](#); photo of Sisters View from Cross Trail courtesy of Sitka Trailworks)

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### GROUPS THAT JOIN HIKING SOCIETY CAN APPLY FOR MICRO-GRANT

Do you have a trail maintenance back log? Do you need help funding small trail projects? If so, [Join American Hiking Society's Alliance Organization today](#). Once you join as a new member or renew your Alliance membership, you will qualify to apply for a micro-grant up to \$2,000 from the National Trail Fund. The application opens on January 17, 2016. More information can be found about the program [here](#).

## 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](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)

### GRANTS

- National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program (deadline Jan 17): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund (deadline Jan 31): <http://tinyurl.com/gl6mvgb>
- People for Bikes grant application process opens Dec 16: [www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/apply-now](http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/apply-now)
- Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program (application deadline Dec 1): <http://tinyurl.com/h93kvcb>

### TRAIL GUIDES

- 12 Trails for Fall Mountain Biking: <http://tinyurl.com/zeqxz5a>
- Five Hiking Trails in Rhode Island: <http://tinyurl.com/nqt6o87>
- 10 Best Hikes in Indiana: <https://americanhiking.org/rootsrated/10-best-hikes-in-indiana/>

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Montana economist: Trails are good for your health and your wallet: <http://tinyurl.com/qaxjaxq>
- In Minnesota, tapped-out mines transformed into mountain biking destination: <http://tinyurl.com/jhmmbp7>
- Insightful new books in the well-worn genre of trail literature: <http://tinyurl.com/zu625ff>
- USA's forest and horse riding trails to get TLC at last: <http://tinyurl.com/hoaqdu3>
- Hiker conquers 3 iconic long-distance trails in 252 days: <http://tinyurl.com/hvd355h>
- The Professional Trail Builders Association is seeking an association manager and conference coordinator (deadline Dec 6): <http://tinyurl.com/zre2fed>
- 2017 National, International Trails Awards (nomination deadline Dec 1): <http://tinyurl.com/hasz3wr>

- 2017 International Trails Symposium call for presentations (deadline Dec 9): <http://tinyurl.com/hqfosvq>

#### *INTERNATIONAL LINKS*

- Five kid-friendly hiking trails (near Hong Kong): <http://tinyurl.com/z5oe8nv>
- Hong Kong's hiking trails offer hidden gems beyond shopping and dining: <http://tinyurl.com/z6llg63>

#### *SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL*

- Five Cold Weather Myths And Misinformation: <http://tinyurl.com/jotkup8>
- 5 Tips For Respecting Wildlife: <http://tinyurl.com/jpoyfy6>
- Hiker happens on Hillary Clinton on the trails: <http://tinyurl.com/jdftsa9>

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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)