



# NEWSLETTER

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

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### 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/get\\_involved/donate.shtml](http://www.alaska-trails.org/get_involved/donate.shtml). 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](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)

#### *Information for all courses*

Where: BLM Anchorage Field Office; 4700 BLM Road. (Near the junction of 68<sup>th</sup> 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.

## SITKA REP, FAIRBANKS AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT TRAILS CONFERENCE



Sitka Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins and Fairbanks author and adventurer Ned Rozell will be the keynote speakers at the Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference to be held May 5-7 in Anchorage.

Representative Kreiss-Tomkins is the youngest member of the Alaska House, in his second terms at the age of 26. He will speak on the importance of trails in Alaska and how they can help Alaska become an international destination for adventure travel.

Author Ned 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. He is the author of four other books, including *Alaska Tracks* and *Natural Alaska*.



Alaska Trails would still like your input on topics that you would like to see addressed at the conference. Please e-mail us at [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org) to share your ideas for the 2016 conference.

(Top, Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins. Bottom, Ned Rozell)

## USE “PICK. CLICK. GIVE.” TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS

Alaska Trails is included in the Permanent Fund Dividend’s “Pick. Click. Give” charitable contributions program. It’s a secure and easy way to make a donation. When you file for your PFD online, you will be given an opportunity to donate using money from your PFD. If you do, please remember Alaska Trails.

If you use “Pick. Click. Give” you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it’s you making the gift.

For more information on “Pick. Click. Give” see: [www.pickclickgive.org](http://www.pickclickgive.org).

## ALASKA TRAILS SEEKS WEBSITE MANAGER, BOARD MEMBERS

We are seeking a new volunteer website manager. Duties include updating and managing [www.alaska-trails.org](http://www.alaska-trails.org) with monthly updates and routine maintenance. We are always seeking people who are interested in serving on our Board of Directors. Please contact [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org) and let us know if you can help.

Check out our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590)

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### KEEP TRAILS IN THE PUBLIC EYE DURING TOUGH BUDGET TIMES

The Alaska State Legislature will be meeting soon and the budget outlook is bleak. More cuts are being called for, as well as more revenues, such as taxes. Trail advocates need to speak loudly if trails are to be treated fairly. There are several ways trails could be affected.

- Staffing for the Recreational Trails Program could be cut, This would be a huge mistake as \$200,000 in state funding brings in more than \$1 million from the federal government (a 7-to-1 return last year), but that \$200,000 has been considered for the budget axe before.
- Staffing for the Department of Natural Resources could be cut. Very few people in state government work solely on trails, but many deal with trails as part of their jobs. If positions are cut, other duties may take precedence over trails.

- Pullouts along roads that offer parking for access to trailheads could see less maintenance, including snowplowing, as the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities focuses on keeping high-traffic roads clear.
- Direct state grants for trail projects could dry up.
- General grants to local governments could be reduced or cut altogether. That will have a ripple effect on all local government operations, including any that deal with trails.

So, what can trail advocates do? Let your voice be heard.

- Call or write your legislators. Our legislators will have many things vying for their attention this session. If they don't hear from trail advocates they may think that trails are not important to Alaskans. Contact information for senators and representatives can be found at: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/> (For guidance in writing letters, see [www.alaska-trails.org/get\\_involved/lobbyletters.shtml](http://www.alaska-trails.org/get_involved/lobbyletters.shtml).)
- Call or write the governor: <http://gov.alaska.gov/Walker/contact/office-locations.html>
- Write an editorial or letter to the editor for your local newspaper.
- Have your trail-related group pass a resolution, then send that to your legislators, the governor, and the local newspaper.

## STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Alaska Nordic Skier (January issue has a few trail-related stories): <http://tinyurl.com/j5fznkh>
- Alaska Lands Update (January): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa/newsletters2.html>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- Outdoor Explorer radio show:
  - Reprise: Babies in the Elements: <http://tinyurl.com/qyhuwah>
  - Historic Alaska Expeditions: <http://tinyurl.com/hlz84hg>
- 9 Trails In Alaska You Must Take If You Love The Outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/z8vfgb2>
- Foolproof ways to avoid Alaska's winter chill when playing outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/zxdsyvq>
- Mushing through a 7.1 quake on rolling, cracking, spurting river ice: <http://tinyurl.com/hyshbrg>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Paddling rough seas off Unalaska 300 days of the year: <http://tinyurl.com/z2mgzvq>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Wilderness Medicine: <http://tinyurl.com/hwcrzte>
- DC asks: Who's that nut jogging in a blizzard? Answer: an Alaskan: <http://tinyurl.com/z9kcuvt>
- Snow: A love letter: <http://www.adn.com/article/20160124/snow-love-letter>
- (Opinion) Gov. Walker must correct inherent bias toward trappers in Board of Game: <http://tinyurl.com/gsfur6r>

## SOUTHEAST LINKS

- On the Trails: Wrens: <http://juneauempire.com/outdoors/2016-01-22/trails-wrens>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### KINCAID PARK, HATCHER PASS IN COMPETITION FOR BEST XC SKI AREA

Kincaid Park and Hatcher Pass both made the voting list for USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice "Favorite Cross-Country Ski Resort." Here's a blurb about the competition:

*Nordic skiing, downhill's more cardio-centric cousin, has exploded in popularity as a fun way to get fit and en-*

joy some of North America's most stunning winter scenery. We asked three Olympians (all current or former members of the U.S. Nordic Ski Team) to nominate their favorite cross country resorts in North America, and now it's your turn to vote! Cast your ballot once per day until voting ends on Monday, February 8 at noon ET.

Read more and/or cast your vote here: <http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-cross-country-ski-resort/>

## NEW FEATURES ADDED TO MATANUSKA GREENBELT TRAILS MAP

Excerpted from an email by Dot Helm regarding the January meeting of Matanuska Greenbelt Trails:

**New regular interactive map** (not the emergency planning one yet) is finished (finally). <http://arcg.is/1Sz72rk> (embedded) or you can get there from the website <http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org/trail-maps/Interactive-Map-beta>. Both of them may be slow to load initially since it's pulling imagery off the MSB server. Some new goodies include the MSB's 2011 imagery. If you go to the Contents, you can turn on the Post numbers, Hillshades (really cool for topography), and Fields (for names). I try to guess what most people will want displayed (without getting too busy) and make that the default, but have been leaving the ability for others to add/subtract layers. Have fun zooming in to see the super imagery.

Remember you can add gps tracks for race routes, hikes, work days, whatever. If people were unable to attend any of the fall sessions on how to use the interactive maps, we can try to schedule something in the spring. Let us know.

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- What to do outdoors now that Alaska's winter has vanished: <http://tinyurl.com/zdtabd7>
- Get it while it's cold: Kayaking Alaska's glaciers: <http://tinyurl.com/jnjnn5l>
- Kiss snowy (Southcentral) Alaska winters goodbye: <http://tinyurl.com/z7sgb5g>
- (Mat-Su) Borough cancels annual Winter Trails Day: <http://tinyurl.com/hwqxnjg>
- Mat-Su landowners battle state over access to historic Iditarod Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/hsgmaug>
- Why are dogs still getting caught in traps near Mat-Su trails?: <http://tinyurl.com/huzovaj>
- Let's Move! initiative dovetails nicely with Anchorage programs: <http://tinyurl.com/zm7swgq>
- With scant snow in Anchorage, sprint mushers head to Willow: <http://tinyurl.com/gqlqw4o>
- Anchorage Transportation Fair: February 4, 2016, 4 and 8pm: <http://anchoragetransportfair.blogspot.com>
- Video: Anchorage is fat bike heaven: <http://www.adn.com/video/video-anchorage-fat-bike-heaven>
- Using nature to nurture: Alaska forest schools move the classroom outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/hzwzpgn>
- Kenai River state park advisory board recruiting members: <http://tinyurl.com/hjvatvc>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### LISTSERV MESSAGE ABOUT TRAPPING GENERATES MANY RESPONSES

A recent post on the Alaska Dog Mushers Association (ADMA) listserv about sled dogs caught in snares while mushing in or near the White Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA) generated a lot of responses. The responses were civil, but the subject obviously causes a lot of concern for mushers and other dog owners who use the trails. Much of the discussion revolved around what is legal regarding traps and trails. Some messages also discussed the difference between responsible and irresponsible trap sets.

One of the messages included a response from Lenore Heppler of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the White Mountains NRA. That message includes a description of what is allowed in the White Mountains in regards to trapping and how regulations might be changed. Heppler later learned that the

dogs were caught in snares off the main Colorado Creek Trail and BLM land.

A story about a recent class held to inform dog owners about trapping and how to release dogs from traps ran in the Outdoors section of Friday's Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. The story also includes details about the incident that started the wave of listserv messages. Read the story here: <http://tinyurl.com/hkuwmxs>

Following is the original ADMA listserv message and the BLM message.

Original message (January 26)

*My friend was running a large string of dogs on the Colorado Creek Trail in the White Mountains yesterday afternoon and two of her dogs were snared around the neck. She had to work hard to free them, fortunately they were not seriously hurt. She was not free-running dogs. Be aware and be careful.*

*>> Robert*

BLM message (January 27)

*My name is Lenore Heppler. I am the Field Manager for the Eastern Interior Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the office that manages the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA). For full disclosure, it was my husband Robert who posted the initial email to the list-serve about the musher who had two of her dogs caught in snares so we at BLM are well aware of the concerns. I'd also like to thank all of you who have called our office with your concerns.*

*In regards to traplines, the current regulations allow for trapping in the WMNRA. There are no required set-backs from the trail. If a trap or snare is creating a public safety hazard in, on, or over a maintained, groomed public use trail, BLM law enforcement staff can remove the trap. If you run across this situation, please take a photo and GPS coordinates if you can or at least a document a good description of the geographic location. Send this information to me at [lheppler@blm.gov](mailto:lheppler@blm.gov). I will see that it gets to our law enforcement staff. If you can, place flagging on the trail well before and after the trap to warn other trail users of the hazard. As some have pointed out on this list, it is illegal by state statute to tamper with or trip a trap.*

*We manage the recreation area for multiple recreational uses and this requires all users to be cognizant of their actions and how they affect other users. Over the years we have worked with trappers to voluntarily keep traps away from trails and to sign their trap lines to warn other trail users about the danger. Most trappers have voluntarily complied with this request and incidents are low, however new trappers come in and problems can pop up.*

*Some of you have expressed interest in requiring trappers to set their traps away from the trails (a set-back). This is something we have been considering, but the process is rather long. First we must do an assessment of the action under the National Environmental Policy Act. This usually involves considering several alternatives, public input, and a consideration of the effects of the action on various resources and recreation. We also consider the economic effects of proposed actions. We are currently in the process of creating a new plan for the WMNRA (and other areas) in the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIRMP/EIS). In this plan we are evaluating whether we should require a set-back of 25 feet from the cleared edge of BLM-maintained trails. We are scheduled to have the final decision on this plan by the end of the year.*

*The second step of the process is to create a Supplemental Rule. We last updated our Supplemental Rules for the WMNRA in 1992. The existing rules cover a variety of concerns including identifying areas closed to summer use of off highway vehicles, camping stay limits, and recreational mining limitations. It also includes rules for the cabin rentals (booking no more than 30 days in advance, maximum stay, etc.) We plan to create supplemental rules after the EIRMP/EIS is complete. To do this we must post the proposed rule in the **Federal Register** and accept public comment for at least 30 days. We then publish our response to the comments received and the final rule in the **Federal Register**. After the EIRMP/EIS is completed, we will go through this process with any rules identified in the EIMRP/EIS. While the*

processes are long, they ensure public notification and involvement in decision making and a full review and disclosure of the effects of the decisions.

In the meantime, we will continue to identify and legally remove hazardous traps, work with trappers to reduce conflict, and will increase our efforts to warn trail users of the risk.

Website: [http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/nlcs/white\\_mtns.html](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/nlcs/white_mtns.html)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BLMWhiteMountains>

Lenore

## BLM TO REVIEW RENTAL PROCESS FOR CABINS IN WHITE MOUNTAINS

The following message about public use cabins in the White Mountains National Recreation Area was included in message by Lenore Heppler from the above story on trapping and trails.

*I would like to let trail users know that this winter we will be reviewing the process and rules for renting the public use cabins in the WMNRA. We will be soliciting feedback and ideas from the users of these cabins. Information and notification of public meetings will be posted on the WMNRA website, the WMNRA Facebook page, in the media and through other means. If you would like to be on a mailing list for notification or have further questions or comments, feel free to contact me at [907-474-2320](tel:907-474-2320) or [lheppler@blm.gov](mailto:lheppler@blm.gov)*

## MESSAGE ASKS FOR GOLDSTREAM 'DECORATIONS' TO BE REMOVED

The following message from the Fairbanks Cycle Club listserv brings up a good point. While any items viewed as fun decorations by some might be viewed as garbage by others, those items definitely become garbage strewn about the trails if not maintained. If you would like to add a little similar "fun" to trails, please do so responsibly: Leave it up for a short time, then clean up after yourself.

*I am wondering if anyone on this listserv is responsible for, or knows who is responsible for, the ton of cheap plastic Christmas balls and laminated bicycle signs hung all around the trails of Gold Stream....*

*While I am sure folks had good intentions here... these things are falling off and will for sure just get lost and left as breakup happens...*

*So if you were involved in hanging these things can you please go pick up your mess?*

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Court upholds conviction of Ester miner who built road on public land: <http://tinyurl.com/hss829p>
- Trip report: Tolovana Hot Springs: <http://tinyurl.com/hsxss3t>
- Trip report: Gilmore Trail area makes for good day ski: <http://tinyurl.com/hrhcs2e>
- It's a snow-covered standoff when battling for the trail: <http://tinyurl.com/hbhu55g>
- A new place to play in the winter (Tanana Lakes Recreation Area): <http://tinyurl.com/j54bgkq>
- Conflict persists over volunteer work on historic Skarland Ski Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/z32twhw>
- Ideal winter conditions bless Alaska Range foothills: <http://tinyurl.com/gr4wm8o>
- Delta Junction Trails to hold Walk of Lights on Liewer Community Trail, Feb 6: <http://tinyurl.com/hops5bn>
- Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System winter newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/jf7r5ln>
- Outdoor opportunities abound: Warm, snowy winter has much to offer: <http://tinyurl.com/huc5zgj>

### APPROPRIATORS BOOST LWCF THREE WAYS IN 2016 MONEY BILL

From the Federal Parks & Recreation Bulletin #15: The House and Senate gave final approval December 18 to an omnibus appropriations bill (HR 2029) with significant assistance to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). President Obama signed the bill into law the same day.

In effect LWCF went three-for-four in a House-Senate conference agreement on HR 2029, with the state side program the big winner.

- First, Congress extended the underlying program as is for three years.
- Second, it put up \$110 million for state side grants, more than twice as much as in current years.
- Third, it approved a \$56.6 million increase for federal land acquisition over fiscal 2015.
- But in the fourth area, the appropriators did not extend the program permanently, just for the three years.

Fiscal 2016 LWCF appropriation: In addition to the program reauthorization HR 2029 makes these allocations: *LWCF FEDERAL*: HR 2029 includes \$234.2 million for the traditional federal land acquisition side of LWCF. That represents a \$56.6 million increase from a fiscal 2015 appropriation of \$177.6. By agency the Bureau of Land Management will receive \$38.6 million compared to \$20 million in fiscal 2015; the Fish and Wildlife Service will receive \$68.5 million compared to \$47.5 million; the Park Service will receive \$63.7 million compared to \$51 million; and the Forest Service will receive \$63.4 million compared to \$47.5 million.

*LWCF STATE*: HR 2029 appropriates \$110 million, compared to \$48 million in fiscal 2015.

(From the American Trails Advocacy page: <http://americantrails.org/support.html>)

### RECREATION COALITION HAS TWO UPCOMING CONTEST DEADLINES

The American Recreation Coalition has two contests with upcoming deadlines. One is the Great Outdoors Month Video Competition. The other is a competition to do a RECx presentation at Partners Outdoors 2016. The submission deadline for the video contest is in April. The presentation contest deadline is in March. For dates and guidelines for each competition, follow the links below:

- Video competition: [www.funoutdoors.com/files/Video%20Competition%20Guidelines.pdf](http://www.funoutdoors.com/files/Video%20Competition%20Guidelines.pdf)
- Presentation competition: [www.funoutdoors.com/files/RECx%20Submission%20Guidelines.pdf](http://www.funoutdoors.com/files/RECx%20Submission%20Guidelines.pdf)

### 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 (January): <http://tinyurl.com/hoesxfj>
  - 2015 National Recreation Trails Photo Contest Winners
  - National Geographic Launches Yearlong Exploration of the Power of Parks
  - Preschool Without Walls
  - The Best Trail Centers for Mountain Biking in England
  - and more...
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (December 2015): <http://tinyurl.com/pxm9jj7>
- FHWA Livability Newsletter (January 2016): <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/>

## ADVOCACY

- REI Volunteer Vacations (some include trail maintenance): <http://tinyurl.com/hatfrg3>
- Revitalizing Trail Systems, Motocross Track Turned Gallup Into "Adventure Capitol": <http://tinyurl.com/jrtycuv>

## STUDIES

- Studies Reveal Health Benefits of Vacations, Parks: <http://tinyurl.com/p7ake58>

## TRAIL GUIDES

- Five2Ride: The Best Mountain Bike Trails in Georgia: <http://tinyurl.com/zgownso>
- The Top 10 Dog-Friendly Hiking Trails In the United States: <http://tinyurl.com/h7rtf3j>

## OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- A story of pain, perseverance, self-discovery on Bay Area Ridge Trail (video): <http://tinyurl.com/h2laes9>
- Did Native Americans Bend These Trees To Mark Trails?: <http://tinyurl.com/hry46nn>
- 10 ways to green your camping trip: <http://tinyurl.com/h7cr3kf>
- Spring into a American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation: <http://tinyurl.com/htccv4c>
- American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund (deadline Feb 19): <http://tinyurl.com/nq9has9>
- Event registration is open for National Trails Day: <http://nationaltrailsday.americanhiking.org/host-information/>
- MDs Now Prescribe Walking as a Boost to Health: <http://tinyurl.com/z6vt96z>
- New Mountain Bike Group Fights to Ride Wilderness Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/hed7bnx>
- Hickenlooper's 'Colorado The Beautiful' Gets New Trail Priorities: <http://tinyurl.com/jujzft>
- New Year Resolution: Getting Unplugged: <http://thebigoutside.com/new-year-resolution-getting-unplugged/>
- Keeping a 100-Year-Old 100 Years Young (through hiking): <http://tinyurl.com/no4a77e>

## INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- World's Best Hikes: 20 Dream Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/jt4ggmb>

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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](mailto: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](mailto:eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org)