



WILLOW TRAIL COMMITTEE

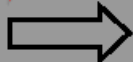
Bill Shary

Willow Trail Committee Chair (2024)

WILLOW TRAIL COMMITTEE



Donate Here



Point your phone camera here, and click on the WACO Square site.



Who we are

As a part of the Willow Area Community Organization (WACO-AK), the Willow Trail Committee (WTC) promotes Ski, Walk, Run, Bike, Sled Dog, Snowmachine, Skijoring, etc. for all age groups within our majestic community. We provide resources and volunteers for human, dog, and snowmachine powered race related trail events on a year round basis. We currently have multiple Winter trails and Summer trails, and foster connection with other trail systems to the north and south of our area.

Within the WTC, currently are 4 trail groups

- **Westgate** -75 Miles of Winter Trails, and 10 Miles of Summer Trails on the Westside of Parks Highway.
- **Emil Stancec** - Historic Trails to the North and East side of the Parks Highway.
- **Haessler/Norris** - Historic trails located on the East side of the Parks Highway, South of Fishhook Road.
- **Summer Trails** - These trails are best accessed from Newman Park off Willow Creek Parkway.
- **Bike Trails** - (future) Document, develop, and promote bike usage in the Willow.

Mission

To provide safe and enjoyable multiuser recreational trails for Willow residents and visitors.

Goals

1. Identify historic and currently used trails.
2. Obtain public use easements for recreational trails and trailheads.
3. Maintain trails for safe and enjoyable use while protecting the natural resources.
4. Provide information to the public on trail safety and etiquette.
5. Provide a forum for trail-related issues.

Meetings

The Trails Committee meets monthly, every third Wednesday at 7:00 PM in the Willow Community Center.

Trail Maps can be found here:

<https://www.waco-ak.org/committees/trails/>

The WTC Facebook Page can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1547758528813477>



700 Square Miles

WHO WE ARE

- Wasilla-13
- Houston-25
- BigLake-127
- Talkeetna-96

Population 2196 (Census 2020)



TRAIL BOUNDARIES NORTH AND SOUTH

- Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) Southwest , right in our back yard
 - Lower Susitna Trails to our Northwest
 - Mid Susitna Valley Trails to our North
 - Big Lake Area Trails to our South.
-
- ❑ *Host of: Iditarod restart, Jr Iditarod, Susitna 100, Billy Taylor 5k, Sven Eriksson 25k, Winter Solstice Stroll, etc...*

THE WORK STARTS NOW (SAFETY=THREE-PERSON TEAM)

You never know what your day looks like



Challenges change with the weather



DIFFERENT SNOW DRAGS

Tube Design- Early Season



- ✓ Cheap and Light.
- ✓ Build with scrap tubing.
- ✓ Easy to unload/empty when loaded with heavy snow.

Yellow Stone - Mid and Late Season



- ✓ \$1300-\$1500.
- ✓ Flatter trail grooming
- ✓ Longer lasting equipment/tool.
- ✓ Heavy, takes two guys to move/empty when full.
- ✓ Very easy to make useful modifications like tongue lift, electric winch hydraulic lift, etc.

The Team approach

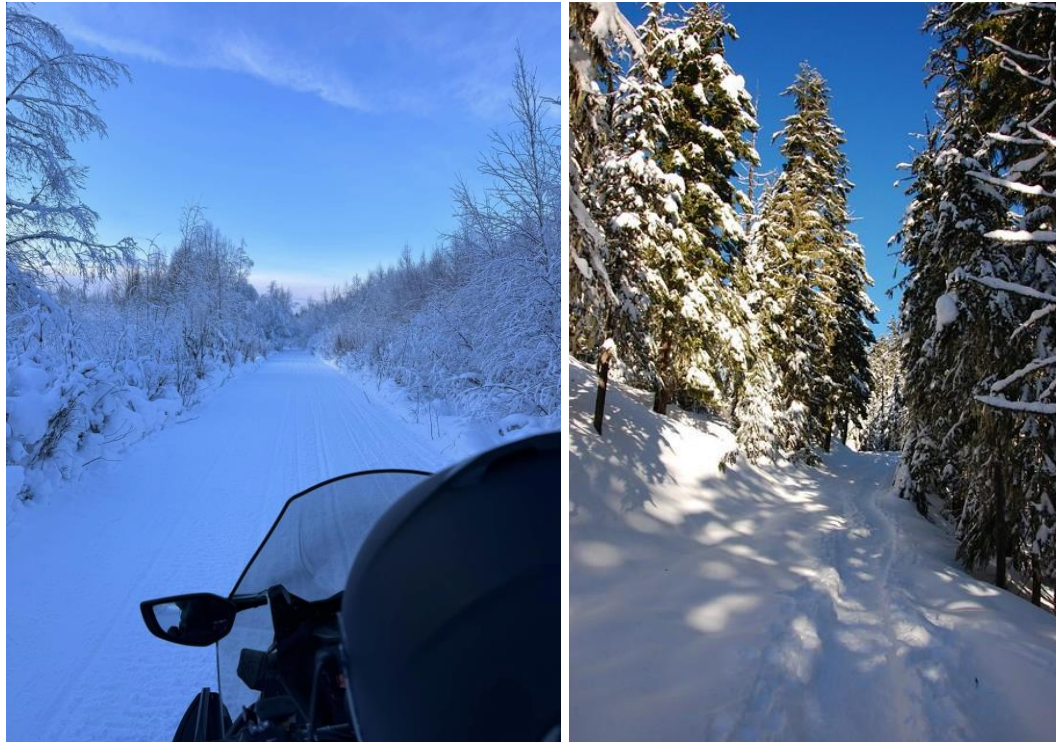


- ✓ It takes a village, but what a great way to go to work.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE TRAIL SYSTEM?

(1 mile of trail = 3 miles of grooming)

The Users view



The Groomers View



TRAIL CONDITIONS AND REPORTING

NLSRA Weekly



Nancy Lake State Recreation Area
Winter Recreation Conditions Current
Date: February 8, 2024

Area	Snowmobile Status	New Snow	Average Snow Depth	Ice Depth	Comments
Cross-Country Ski Trails	NON-MOTORIZED	6"	35"		Packed and groomed 2.8.24
Average Lake Ice	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	OVERFLOW
Canoe Trail	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	OVERFLOW
Red Shirt Lake Winter Trail	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	Nancy Lake Pkwy and Red Shirt winter trail groomed 2.8.24
East Red Shirt Lake Trail	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	
Cross Park Trail	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	
West Rolly Lake Motorized Corridor	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	Groomed by WTC
Dollar Ponds to Lynx Lake	OPEN	6"	35"	12+"	

Average snow depth recorded is uncompressed. Snowmobile openings are based on the snowpack's ability to protect underlying vegetation and include: depth measurements, snow density, wind loading, temperatures, forecast, terrain, topography, elevation, and snow base and ice conditions. River and lake **ice crossing safety is not implied and at the risk of the individual.

Conditions update:

Approximately 6" of snow fell 2/4 to 2/5 followed by much warmer temperatures. The extreme cold snap has ended and there is a lot of deep powder in the swamps and on the lakes to play in.

Use caution as OVERFLOW has been observed on many of the area lakes with the warmer weather. Ride with others and bring gear to help in the event a snowmachine becomes stuck in overflow.

This weekend should provide excellent conditions to play in all the fresh snow and enjoy the warmer temperatures.

Reminder that highway vehicles are prohibited beyond the winter trailhead/Nancy Lake Pkwy, mile 2.2. Snowmachines, skiers, dog mushers, and fat tire bikers are welcome beyond this point.

A \$5 day-use fee or annual parking pass is required at most trailheads throughout the park. Please respect private



WTC Weekly



WTC Willow Trails Winter Conditions Report West Gateway Weekly Status



REPORT DATE: 03/07/24
REPORT PERIOD: 03/01/24 to 03/08/24/24
PREPARED BY: Spinde

SUMMARY: Spring riding. Excellent trail conditions. Fair off trail conditions. Warmer temps.

With Iditarod underway, it signals one thing: spring riding season. The West Gateway has been groomed, the trees have been cleared, and the temperatures have been consistently in the mid 20s.

The off-trail riding is still a little rough as we only got a couple inches of snow on top of the crusty layer. The trail riding is another matter. The trails are in great shape.

The overflow situation has improved vastly, although there are still some pockets in untracked area. Use caution on lake crossings.

This is some of the best conditions of the year as the days get longer, and the sun feels warmer. Come out and enjoy the West Gateway trails.

Trail	Condition	Date Groomed	Comments
Willow Lake-Westgate Center	Groomed	This week	Some small bumping/ loose snow
Westgate Center-Willow Swamp	Groomed	This week	Mostly flat/hard trails on lakes
Willow Swamp Loop	Groomed	This week	Small bumps/ 12"-16' wide/drifts have been knocked down
Old Hunters	Groomed	This week	8' wide/flat/loose snow/trees now cleared
Big Swamp to Rolly Creek	Groomed	This week	Mostly flat/ some loose snow
Rolly Lakes to Nancy Lake SRA	Groomed	This week	Groomed trail access to Nancy Lake SRA/pkwy also groomed
Rolly Creek from Willow Swamp	Groomed	This week	Flat/loose snow. (Big Su access)
Corral Hill to Big Susima	Groomed	This week	Groomed/Flat (Big Su access)
Big Swamp to Iron Dog Trail	Packed	This Week	Medium to large bumps. Big Lake access.
Lucky Shot	Groomed	This week	Flat with loose snow
Windsock	Groomed	This week	Flat/loose snow
Shirley Lake	Groomed	This week	Flat/some areas with small bumps
Almond/Boot Lake/John Lake	Groomed	This week	8' wide /flat
Emswiler to Newman's Park	Groomed	This week	Flat/ a few small bumps
Smokey's Track	Groomed	This week	8' wide/flat/excellent
Shem Pete (Newman's Park)	Packed	5 weeks	Non-motorized use only: skiing/walking trail is packed
Deshka X-Over	Groomed	This week	Groomed to mid valley trails
RECENT SNOW/TEMP CONDITIONS IN WESTGATE AREA TRAIL IMPACT			
2 inches of new snow mid week. Trails are mostly flat/loose snow on top			
15 to 32 deg temps Mon-Thurs. Trails soften in afternoon			
Trail riding: excellent			

SNOWMOBILES represented
4.7% of all registered
 vehicles
 in Alaska in 2022 



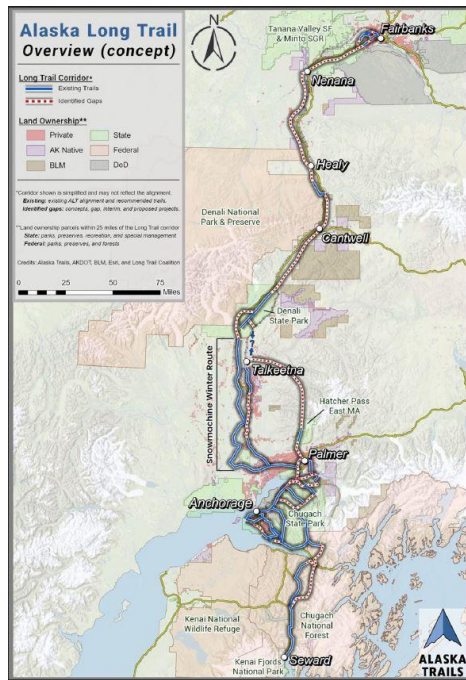
CHALLENGES:

- Road crossings, Railroad Crossings
- Road berms, Tire ruts
- Spruce Beetle Kill, Downed trees
- Lack of Trail Signage
- Limited Funding sources
- Groomer Insurance?
- Who is the resident mechanic? Shop?
- Lack of existing WTC owned Equipment
- Contractor or should we own Equipment?



ALASKA LONG TRAIL

Big Picture



THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL VISION:

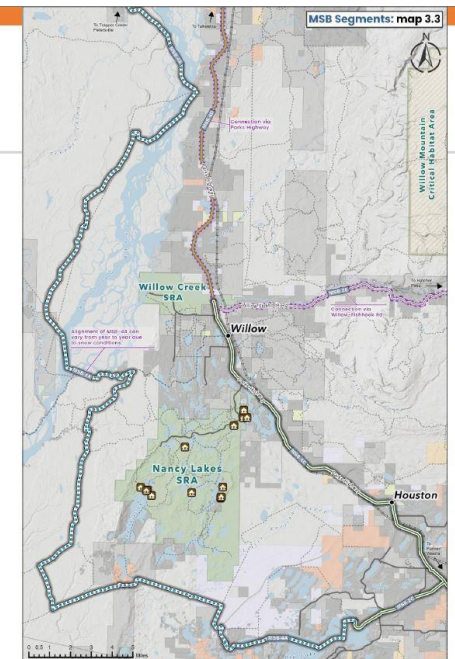
A world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain and diverse communities from the Pacific to the Interior, embracing the many ways Alaskans recreate outdoors and bolstering the Alaska economy by attracting visitors from all over the world.

Please connect to our beautiful Trail System

Where and why are there proposed braids in the Alaska Long Trail?

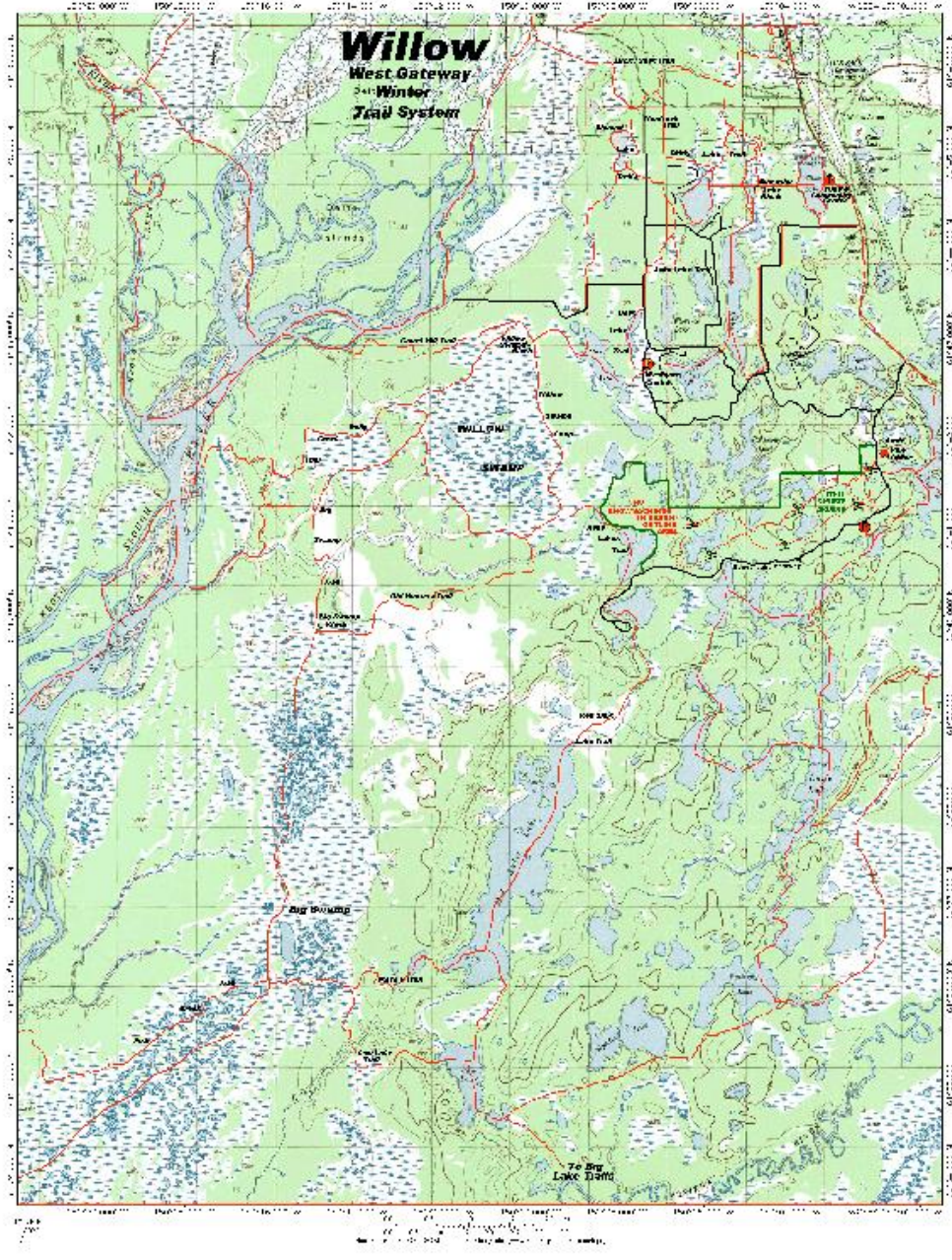
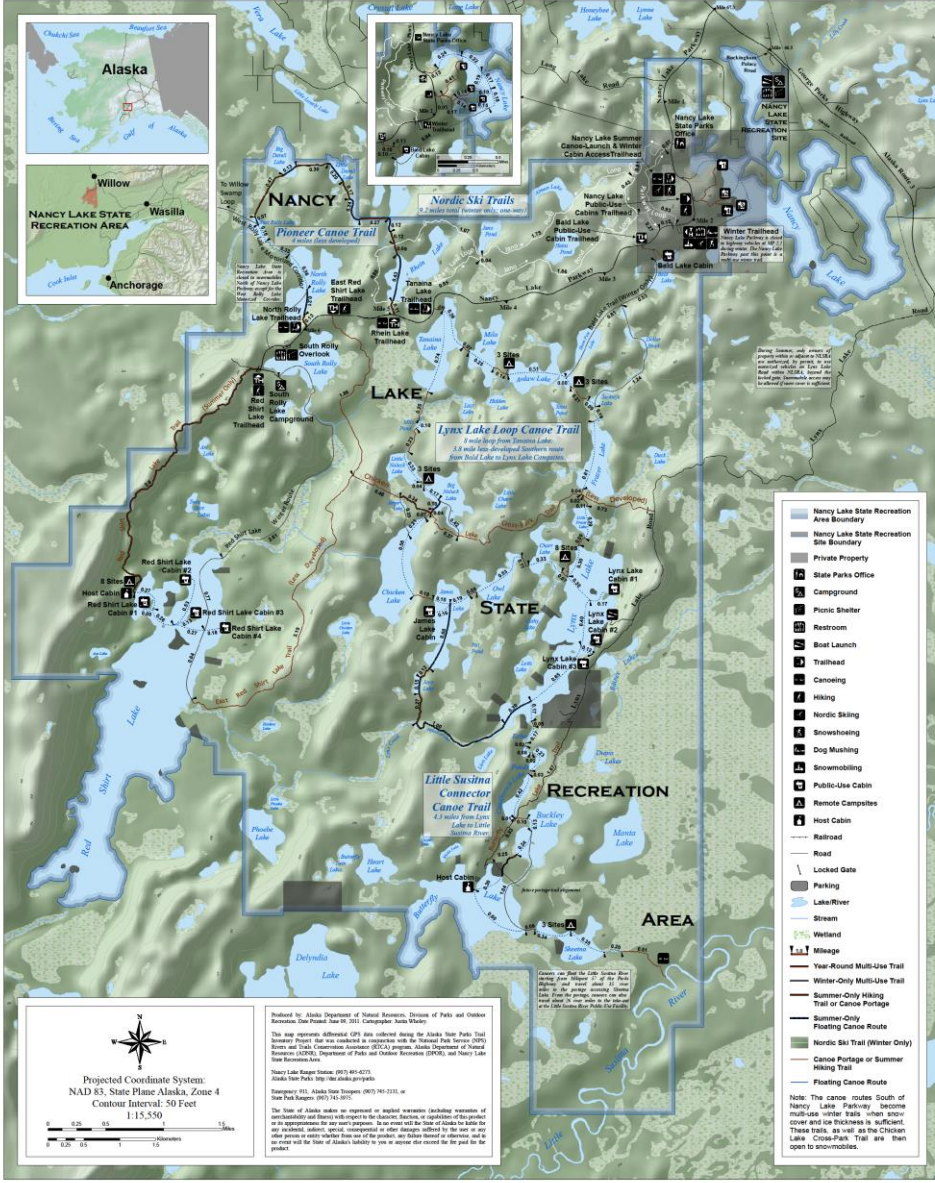
In summary, the ALT will be a braided route

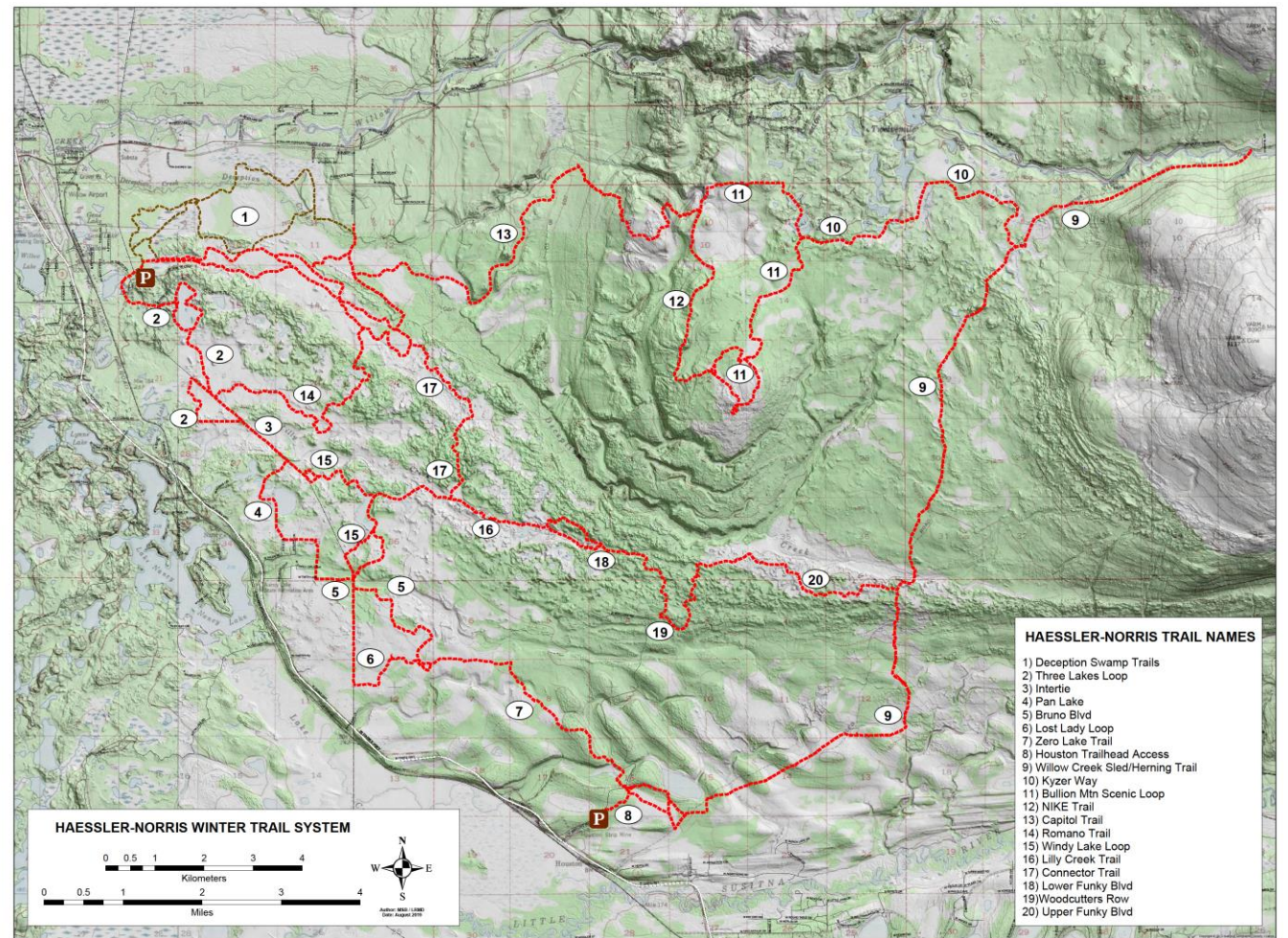
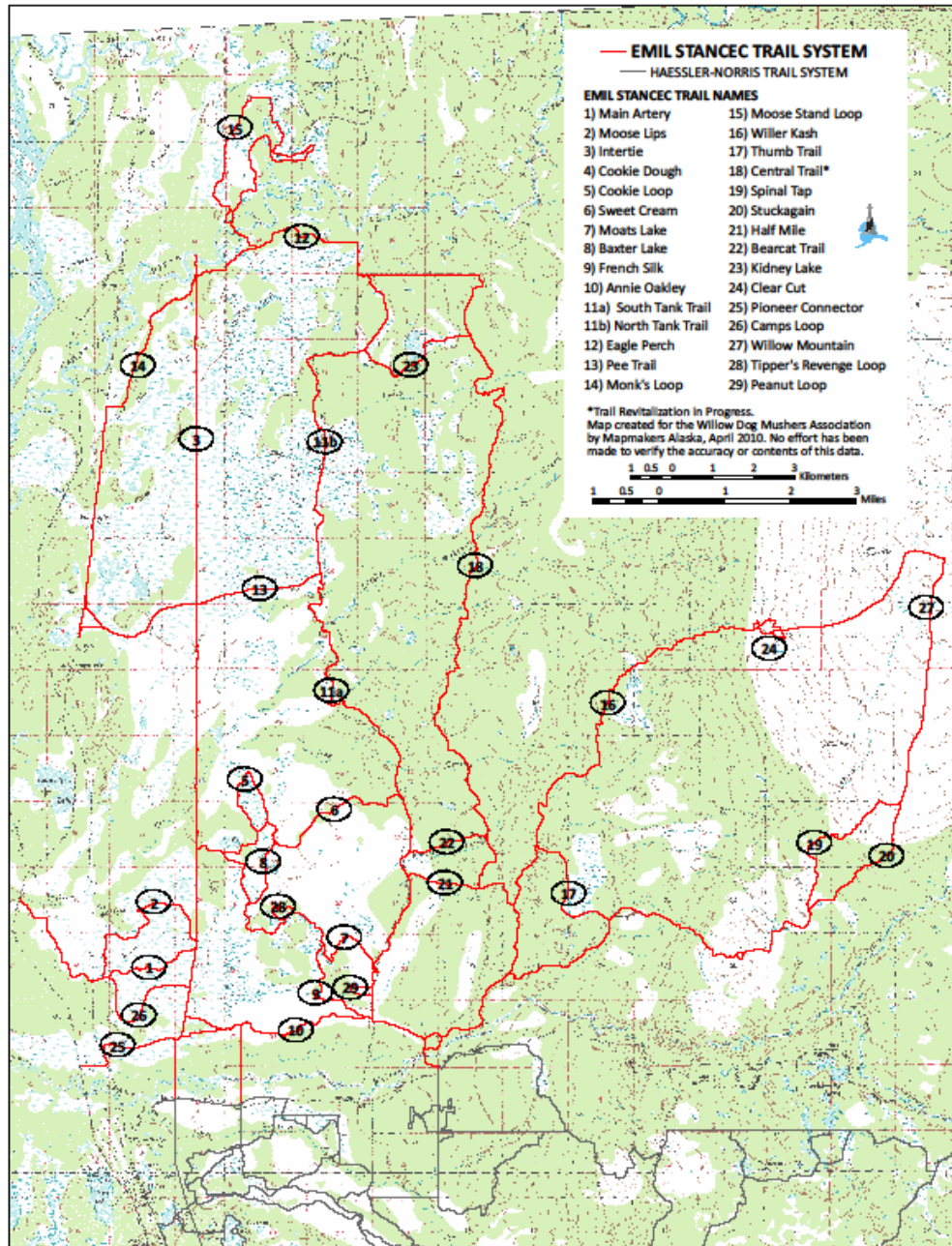
- Seasonality
- User types
- Provide user-friendly and more challenging options



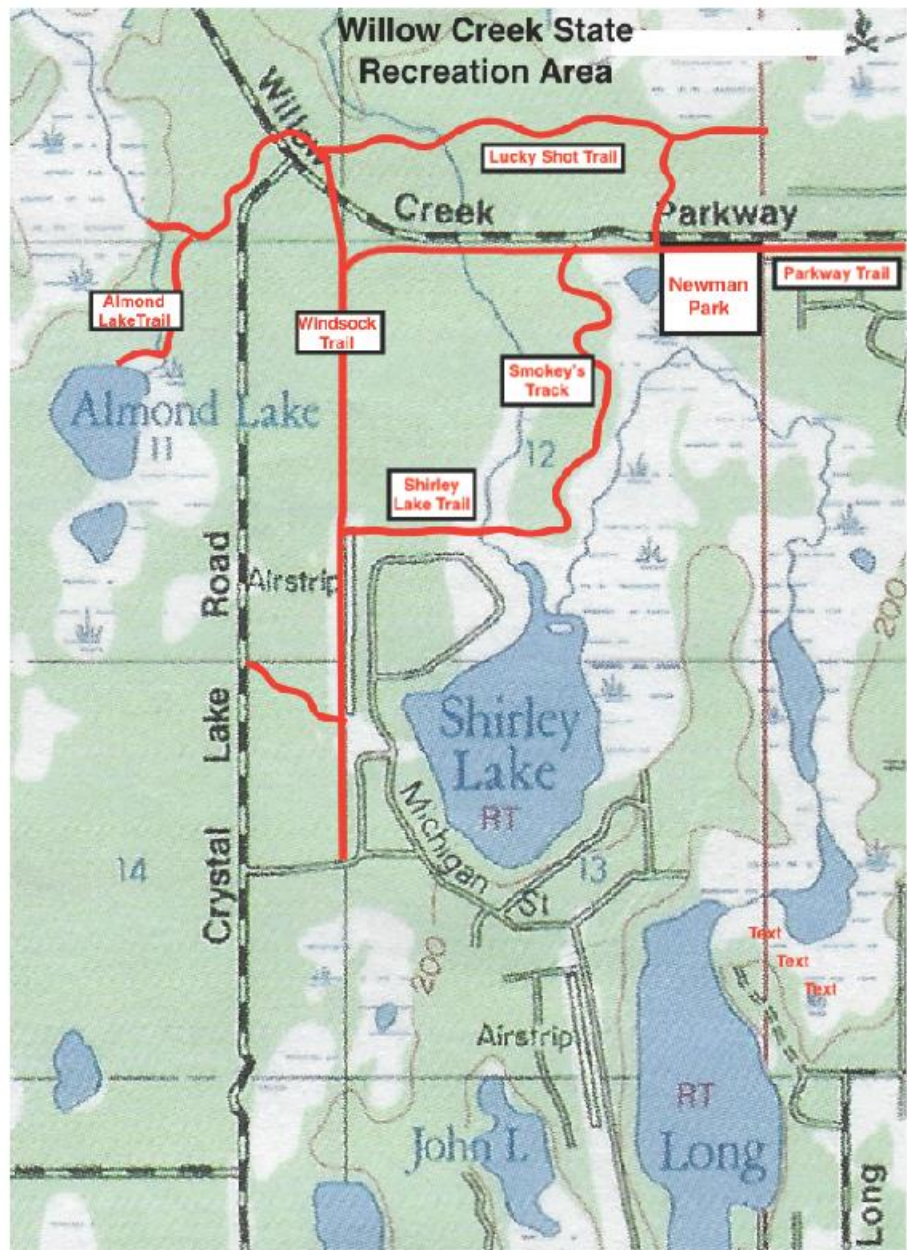


NANCY LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

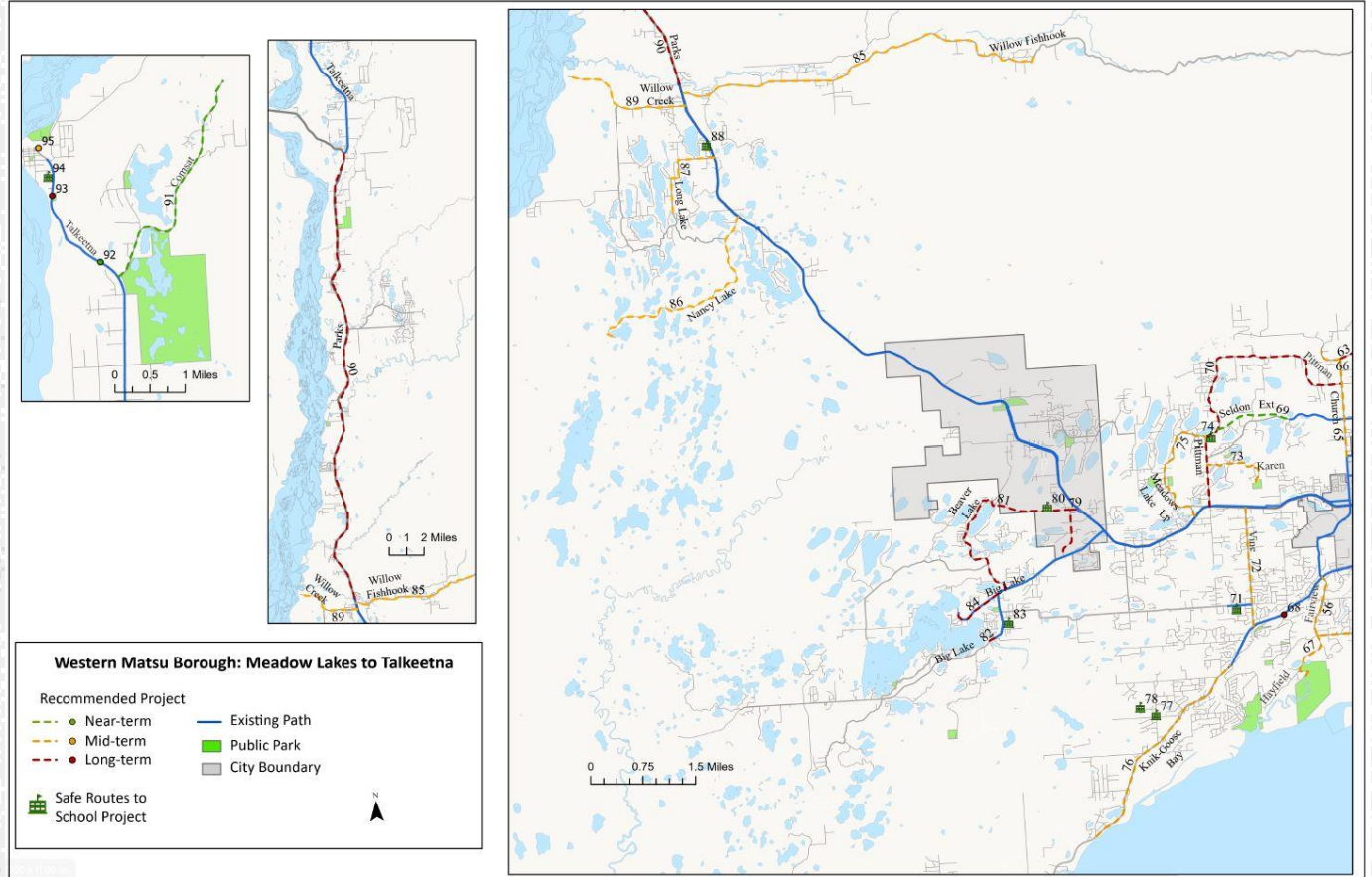




Swamps and Lakes inhibit summer use of many of our winter trails...



Summer Trail System



Proposed Bike Trails

PAPER MAPS ARE YESTERDAY'S NAVIGATION PHONE APPS AND GPS DATA ARE THE PATH FOR TOMORROW

Visual Mapping Devices

- Outer Spatial
- OnX Hunt
- OnX Backcountry
- Polaris Ride Command
- Garmin Products
- etc.

Trail Data File Types

- GDB, GPS, GPX
- KML, KMZ
- etc.
- Trail Editing software options?
- Upload to whom?



THANK YOU

<https://www.waco-ak.org/committees/trails/>