



NEWSLETTER

DEC
2022

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

LAST 2022 TRAIL TALES SUPPORTS SKIKU WITH YOUR TRAIL STORIES

ATTEND Alaska Trails announces the last Trail Tales storytelling event of 2022.



Our final event of the year will be on Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m., in partnership with Skiku, which supports sustainable community-driven ski programs primarily focused on rural Alaska and Alaska Native youth. It will be held at the Anchorage Museum. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$20.

All our shows this year have sold out, so don't wait. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alaska-trails.org/trail-ales

With Trail Tales, we partner with a different community trail group each event. In the spirit of Arctic Entries, storytellers share seven-minute stories about their trail experiences, adventures, and life in general. This year we have been happy to share the stage with the Alaska Huts Association, the Chugach Park Fund, and the Anchorage Park Foundation.

RACE ACROSS ALASKA STARTS IN DECEMBER, BENEFITS TRAILS

ENTER/DONATE Online registration for the Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge began in November and the virtual race starts on the Winter Solstice – December 21.

RAAWC is a fundraiser for the Alaska Long Trail project. It has raised over \$60,000 for the Long Trail is just two years!

RAAWC, a multi-sport challenge, is a great way to get outside while challenging yourself to stay happy and healthy during winter. And you'll be helping our cause to help build and maintain some of the best trails in the world!

Here's how it works. You can run, walk, fatbike, indoor bike, XC ski, swim, or any activity you like. You can choose from eight different virtual distances – from 60 miles to 2,000 miles, which is a whopping 22.3 miles per day. Now that's a challenge. The goal is to log as many miles as you can over the three months of winter to get (virtually) from location A to B. You can also participate as a team (friends/family/school).

- 60 miles = Anchorage to Whittier (0.7 miles/day)
- 125 miles = Anchorage to Sheep Mountain (1.4 miles/day)



- 235 miles = Anchorage to Denali National Park (2.6 miles/day)
- 350 miles = Anchorage to Delta Junction (3.9 miles/day)
- 500 miles = Alaska Long Trail, Seward to Fairbanks (5.6 miles/day)
- 800 miles = Denali Highway Loop (8.9 miles/day)
- 1150 miles = Historic Iditarod Trail (12.8 miles/day)
- 2000 miles = Ketchikan to Deadhorse (22.3 miles/day)

You will have the ability to log your miles, track your progress, collect virtual badges, and see where you rank compared to others on the leader board daily. You can invite others to this challenge to help you to stay motivated all winter long.

Online registration began November 1, and the virtual race starts on Winter Solstice – December 21. [See the website for more details: www.raawc.com/Race/AK/Anchorage/AlaskaChallenge](http://www.raawc.com/Race/AK/Anchorage/AlaskaChallenge)

RAAWC is a fundraiser for the Alaska Trails and the Alaska Long Trail project. **For every racer that participates, \$10 will be donated to Alaska Trails PLUS racers can donate additional funds to support the development of The Alaska Long Trail. (If you choose to decline the swag you can donate even more to Alaska Trails: \$25 for the hat and shirt, and \$10 for the finishers medal.)** Last year more than \$40,000 was donated through participation and donations! Alaska Trails is very grateful for the financial support from the race, but also the boost it gives to the community by inspiring an active, healthy lifestyle.



The official race cannon will be fired at the Zoom Kickoff Party on December 21 at 6pm AKS (10pm EST). Join the Facebook group to hear about pop-up Zoom and/or Zwift FREE workouts along with facebook live videos: www.facebook.com/groups/824863588292365

SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

November 23: Our friends at Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area need our help! If you value National Heritage Areas and the outdoor recreation experiences they provide, please consider sending a letter to your representatives asking them to support the National Heritage Area Act. Visit the following link for a draft letter and contact info for our Alaska representatives: <https://kmtacorridor.org/jobs-and-volunteer-opps/>

Shared from

Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area

Nov 22: It's a critical time for National Heritage Areas and we are on the cusp of getting essential



legislation passed that would reauthorize KMTA, along with 54 other Heritage Areas across the country. Help us cross the finish line by contacting your representatives and requesting their support of the National Heritage Area Act. Visit the volunteer section our website below to find contact info for key representatives and a draft letter you can tailor as needed.

<https://kmtacorridor.org/jobs-and-volunteer-opps/>

November 20: Are you curious about what it takes to build a sustainable trail? Check out this short video on the many variables trail builders consider when building or improving a trail.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFIdIVnqeYA>

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Steve Cleary, Executive Director



Thankful Thoughts & Looking Ahead

Alaska Trails has a lot to be thankful for as we head into the heart of winter. We are looking forward to a bright 2023 and are excited to be part of the community that is building, maintaining, and promoting trails across our great state.

Staying healthy is challenging during this dark time of the year. Recreating on trails continues to be a great way for Alaskans to bolster both their physical and mental health. From hunting to mountain biking, strolling with family or running hard with friends – trails are a great way to get you, your friends, and your family outside. In this holiday season, we wish you health and good times AND we hope some of those times will include some fun trail adventures.



We are prepping for a great 2023. Alaska Trails staff have been meeting with land managers like Chugach National Forest and Chugach State Park to plan projects both for our paid trail crews and our volunteer events. We are excited to help land managers build and maintain trails in 2023 and beyond.

Thankful for our donors!

Alaska Trails is one of four recipients of the proceeds of the Anchorage Mayor's Charity Ball in 2022. This gala event was delayed because of COVID so we are grateful that it was successful this October. Alaska Trails will receive a GIANT check on December 12th, so please stay tuned for more details on that.

We are grateful to all our financial donors – especially from Pick.Click.Give, which totaled nearly 300 donors who contributed just under \$20,000 – WOW! And a BIG THANK YOU to the Odom Corporation and Brown Jug for their generous and consistent contributions to Alaska Trails. These shots in the arm are a huge boost to our bank account and help to keep our momentum going.

The Alaska Long Trail

Alaska Trails is looking forward to continuing work on the Alaska Long Trail in 2023. Alaska is long overdue for this type of world-class trail and the economic diversification it will bring to our state. Alaska Trails worked together with partners to secure funding for the Alaska Long Trail in the FY2023 state capital budget, and Governor Dunleavy approved \$4.22M for 7 of the 15 projects to complete the trail! We are ready to continue the work of securing the rest of the funding to be able to connect 500+ miles of Alaska via a sustainable and exceptional trail system. Alaska Trails will continue to work with its partners to highlight the great trails on the Long Trail route that already exist and to connect the dots to make this expansive vision a reality.



Again, we are grateful to our donors, supporters, and volunteers for all their generosity – we truly could not do it without you.

Happy Trails,

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

MEETING WILL COVER STATE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET SYSTEM

ATTEND There are a variety of places to get trail funding, but to get it from the state legislature, you need to know about the state legislative budget process. That's how several legs of the Alaska Long Trail got funded.

The Alaska Outdoor Alliance will be holding a Zoom Lunch and Learn on **December 7 at noon**. Here's a description:

In this session, you'll learn about the system the state legislature uses to log and track requests for funding. It's the place outdoor advocates should start when contemplating asking legislators to include funding for them in the state budget. In this session, you'll learn the basics on how, when, and why to use CAPSIS from legislative staffer Mercedes Colbert and Mariyam Medovaya of Alaska Trails. This session will be hosted on Zoom. [Link to pre-register](#).



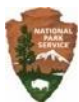
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvceGsqDlvGNERk6DCTXvApbvFIDVrLeW9>

See the Facebook Event here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1234311130682405/>

SUPPORT PARKS AS PART OF YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

BUY A PASS The holiday shopping season is here. You can use it to encourage people to get outside AND support some of our greatest recreational assets. Buy a pass for yourself or someone else.

- **Alaska State Parks annual pass:** Support state parks during a time of tight state budgets. Buy a day-use pass and your parking is paid for when you park at a state parks trailhead that requires a fee. Passes are good for the calendar year. Annual boat launch passes are also available: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes> (Passes are also available to purchase in person. See the webpage for available locations.
- **National Park Service annual passes:** The park service offers general passes. It also has a variety of other discounted or free passes for seniors, fourth-graders, people with disabilities, some volunteers, and members of the military: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>



STATE HUNTER ACCESS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

APPLY Applications for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Hunter Access Program will be available starting December 1.

The 2023 program schedule is now posted on the website (<https://tinyurl.com/3hecnsny>). **Anyone interested in applying should review the updated FAQ's and criteria as you think about project ideas.** Please contact ADF&G with questions. Contact information is on the website.

2023 Program Schedule

- December 1, 2022: Applications available online, application period opens



- February 8, 2023: Proposals received prior to midnight ADT will receive a courtesy administrative review
- **March 1, 2023: Application due date, application period closes**
- September 2023: Applicants that have been selected for award are notified
- January 2024: Award and grant agreements are finalized, signed, and implemented

Grants from this program do not necessarily go toward trails, but they often do. Trail projects from this project benefit all trail users. To see example projects, use the “Completed Projects” or “Project Map” on the main page (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunteraccess.main>).

Photos of Byers Lake bridge from Hunter Access Grant Program webpage

WINTER TRAIL GROOMING PROGRAMS NEED YOUR HELP

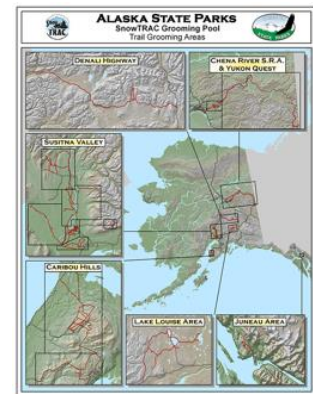
DONATE/SERVE Winter is upon us and if there is no snow on the ground in your area, there soon will be.

Many winter trails activities require (or at least are much improved by) grooming, such as snowmachining, skiing, mushing, and fatbiking. If you engage in an activity that is improved by grooming, please remember to support those efforts. There are several ways you can help.

If you use an area that is clearly groomed and has a grooming fund, make sure to donate. Not all trails that are groomed have a specific grooming fund, but you can also join or donate to the group that is doing the grooming. Look for signs that tell you how you can help.

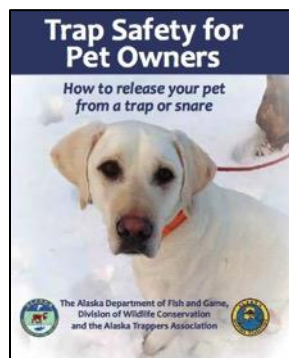
You can also support the Alaska Snowmachine Trails Program, which provides funds for grooming in several areas of the state. The grooming this program provides benefits more than snowmachiners. Anyone who uses the groomed trails benefits, including fatbikers, skiers, mushers, and hikers. You can't donate to the Snowmachine Trails Program, but you can help it by making sure to register your snowmachine, which is what funds the program. You can also serve on the SnowTRAC board, which advises the state administration on how the funds are spent. Finally, you can advocate for the program. In years past, administrations have tried to cut the program as part of budget cutting measures. However, strong advocacy has kept the program alive.

To find out more about the program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>
Most importantly, get out there and enjoy all the great winter trails we have in Alaska!



RESOURCES HELP REDUCE PET/TRAPPING CONFLICTS

Trapping season opens November 1, 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 (see “Sharing the Trails” under the “Hunting > Trapping” dropdown menu), and on the ATA website (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). To order a copy of the DVD check the ATA store (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.

GET OUT ON THE TRAILS TO RECREATE BUT DO SO RESPONSIBLY

Are you in the know for snow? As seasons change, so do our practices to stay safe outside and to protect the places we play.

Winter is a beautiful time, but with the new season comes new challenges and safety considerations to take into account. The winter environment changes quickly and access points may be more limited. We want everyone to be able to enjoy this incredible time of year, and we want you to stay safe while doing it. Check out these tips to gauge your winter safety awareness, and do your research to #RecreateResponsibly this season.



- Know Before You Go – Some areas can become dangerous with winter conditions. Research your destination, as roads and facilities may be closed in winter.
- Practice Physical Distancing – Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth. When possible, opt to eat and rest outside. If you feel sick, stay home.
- Plan Ahead – Check local conditions and prepare for the elements, packing extra layers, waterproof clothing, and avalanche safety gear for the backcountry.
- Play It Safe – Know your limits and your gear. Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury.
- Explore Locally – Consider exploring locally, as driving and parking may be more challenging in winter. If you travel, be mindful of your impact on Native and local communities.
- Leave No Trace – Did you know that the snow is our water supply? Keep our winter playgrounds clean. Pack out any human or pet waste. Be respectful of the land.
- Build an Inclusive Outdoors – Everyone deserves to experience a winter wonderland. Be an active part of making the outdoors safe, accessible, and welcoming for all identities and abilities.

For more information, including how to spread the message, see: <https://tinyurl.com/y6zlyrc3>

From Winter Wildlands Alliance

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE

JOIN, ACT Climate change affects everyone, especially winter sports enthusiasts like snowmachiners, mushers, cross-country skiers, and fatbikers.

A warming climate can mean shorter snow seasons, and more extreme events like snow droughts and rain-on-snow events. These will just get worse unless we slow climate change, which means we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

But can the actions of one or two people make a difference? Yep. Especially if more people are doing the same. Here are two things you can do right now to help make a difference.

Join "Fix My Funds"

<https://fixmyfunds.org/>



Fix My Funds is a group of climate and financial experts working to help you take control of your investment power and shift the economy toward a sustainable future. This group regularly has sign-on letters and petitions urging investment businesses to make more sustainable choices.

Take a personal action



Turn down the thermostat. Heck, you already know how to deal with the cold when you're outside. Do the same when you're inside! Turn down the heat in your house and put on another layer or two. Turning down the heat helps reduce the amount of fossil fuels we are using. And maybe it'll make you be able to handle those outside winter temps just a little better!

Climate change may seem like an overwhelming problem, but we humans created it one step at a time, and we can solve it that way, too. Let's do what we can to ensure that future winters still have usable snow for us and for our children, grandchildren, and beyond.

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALASKA

Nov 25: 🙄 ❄️ Do you know what's happening with the Community Winter Access Trails and travel over the tundra in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska? Satellite and on-the-ground systems help us monitor conditions in real time. We share weekly reports on ice thickness, snow depths, soil and air temperatures, weather, and water conditions. The reports help BLM make management decisions and inform residents about potential travel conditions!

📅 The weekly reports are shared on our website and the BLM NPRA News page. ➡️ Check it out: <https://tinyurl.com/puehvh>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Crowd-sourced trail condition reports (with map): <https://www.snowio.com/>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Job opportunity: Chugach Stewardship Coordinator - closes Dec 22: <https://tinyurl.com/7wmkhta5>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

FOUNDATION OFFERS MOUNTAINS TO SEA, PARK LOOP GUIDES

The Anchorage Park Foundation, working with Alaska State Parks, has a new video guide out called Mountains to Sea.

This half-day adventure links existing trails in a traverse from Chugach State Park's new Hemlock Burn singletrack trail down through parks and paths, ending at the sea in downtown Anchorage. It also helps you find the website for the Glen Alps webcam (<https://tinyurl.com/2zheb8ha>) so you can avoid the



crowds, learn how the Anchorage trail system and Chugach Hillside trails can link up, and determine what to pack for your adventure.

The video shows how an experienced rider can do it in one day, but it can also be divided into segments that can be done over the year by biking, hiking, rolling, skiing, or walking. If you are just getting started on mountain biking, please know these trails are intermediate level. Get ready to squeeze your brakes – or you may

want to walk portions of the route. As always, please enjoy the trails and practice safe etiquette. Check out Christina's GPS route (<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40004018>) from the video.

CHUGACH STATE PARK LOOP TRAIL

If you are looking for a walk with a gentle elevation gain and views of the mountains and the sea, try this loop from Prospect Heights. Plan on 90 minutes to 2 hours depending on your speed. Watch particularly for moose and cyclists. Take Golden Grass to South Fork Rim Trail (one way heading up hill) to White Spruce to Powerline Trail which takes you back to the parking lot. Bring the Chugach Hillside Map:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/brochures/hillsidebrochure.pdf>

From Anchorage Park Foundation newsletter

OUTDOOR SURVIVAL CLASS OFFERED AT CAMPBELL CREEK CENTER

Winter Outdoor Survival Workshop will be held from 6:30 to 8:30pm at the Campbell Creek Science Center on December 2. There are so many ways to enjoy Alaska outdoors in winter! How prepared are you to deal with the unexpected? In this workshop, you will learn the basics of winter survival, including how to make a fire, how to create shelter, how to dress, and what gear to bring. Participants will travel on and off trails across uneven ground and through the woods in areas that may be snowy and icy. Notify the Center in advance of any special needs or requirements you have. This event is \$10; register at <https://www.recreation.gov/ticket/10089159/ticket/10089924>



From What's Up by Peg Tileston

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

THE HOARDING MARMOT

November 2: Get excited! Winter is on its way and Trail Bingo is close behind!



How does Trail Bingo work? It's easy! Purchase a bingo card to benefit local trail conservation nonprofits, get out on the trails on your card, and win prizes from local businesses! That's what we call a win/win/win situation.

More from Hoarding Marmot email

Join us for our bi-annual fundraising event! Trail Bingo is a great way to get outside and support local trail non-profits while winning prizes from local businesses. 100% of proceeds for Winter 2023 Trail Bingo will be donated to Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage and Single Tracks Advocates.

Pre-order and information below, fundraiser begins Dec. 1st!

<https://tinyurl.com/y6n3prkk>



CHUGACH MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDERS



Nov 21: We want to thank the Chugiak Dog Musers Association for joining us this past weekend for a site visit to the proposed Northern Extension of the Coastal Trail.

This "Beach Lake Trail" segment will connect Eagle River to the Coast and will also be a part of the larger Alaska Long Trail system.

We are working to refine the existing Beach Lake Master Plan to safely separate mushers from hikers, bikers, and skiers, and provide a better experience for all trail users.

Nov 16: Thanks to everyone who came out the first public meeting for the Beach Lake Trail connecting Eagle River to the Coast. There was a lot of passionate testimony.

After hearing musher's concerns, we have come up with two new alternatives for consideration. We'd like to hear YOUR opinions!

The proposed ADA-accessible Beach Lake Trail will be the first segment of the Alaska Long Trail through Chugiak-Eagle River via the Northern Extension of the Coastal Trail.

The next Parks and Rec Board meeting will be **Mon Dec 12th 7pm next to the Eagle River Library.**



Nov 9: At 1,750 acres, Chugiak-Eagle River's largest municipally owned regional park, Beach Lake Park, has 30 miles of cross-country skiing and dog mushing trails, but less than 1/4 mile of year-round multiuse trail.

We propose to build about one mile of year-round multiuse trail along the west side of Beach Lake out to the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet.

This is an approved trail in the 2011 Beach Lake Master Plan. **More info** at www.CMBRalaska.org

MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Nov 14: **On 12/1/2022 the 2023 Annual Mat-Su Borough Trails Parking Pass will be available online** (<https://matsugov.us/>), at the MSB Admin Building, Talkeetna Library, and at the Jim Creek Park Shop.

Annual parking passes are good for the current calendar year and valid at the following trailheads:

Pioneer Ridge – Austin Helmers

Jim Creek Recreation Area

West Butte

Lazy Mountain

Matanuska River Park

Crevasse Moraine

Government Peak Recreation Area

Alcantra Sports Complex

S Big Lake Parking Lot

Ayrshire Parking Lot s

Settlers Bay Coastal Park

Christiansen Lake

Talkeetna Lakes Park

Wigmi Road

Chase Parking Lot



**2023 ANNUAL
MSB TRAILS
PARKING PASSES
ON SALE
12/1/2022**

LOCATIONS

ONLINE: WWW.MATSUGOV.US

MSB ADMIN BUILDING ~ 350 E. DAHLIA, PALMER
MONDAY - FRIDAY / 8AM - 5PM

TALKEETNA LIBRARY ~ 24645 TALKEETNA SPUR RD., TALKEETNA
MONDAY - SATURDAY / 11AM - 6PM

JIM CREEK PARKS SHOP ~ 17701 E. SULLIVAN RD, PALMER
MONDAY - FRIDAY / 8AM - 1PM

Annual parking passes must be permanently affixed to the lower passenger side of the windshield and are valid for 1 vehicle only. Sharing passes between vehicles is prohibited.

ALASKA STATE PARKS

Nov 7: Albert Loop Trail is now open to the public after its annual closure during the time of high bear activity in the area. 🐻 🗿 Bear activity is still possible, so be prepared. More info here and link to bear safety tips: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

ALASKA HUTS ASSOCIATION

November 10: One of the most common questions that we get asked is "Why is your name Alaska Huts if you only have one Hut?"



The answer is.. we are working on that! We just opened a new, self-sufficient standalone yurt at Manitoba Mountain (the Silvertip Yurt), and we are fundraising for the Lars Spurkland Hut and the Glacier Discovery Project. Alaska Huts wants to operate hut-to-hut systems here in Alaska and make them accessible!

FRIENDS OF KACHEMAK BAY STATE PARKS

November 1: Thank you volunteers for showing up to haul 2 very heavy bear boxes to Kayak Beach today. Thanks to Mako's Water Taxi for boat transport. With the increased number of summer visitors, the one bear box was overflowing, and people were leaving food out for bears to get into. A fed bear is a dead bear and a danger to all. Now there are THREE Bear boxes there, 2 near Grace trailhead and one on the other far end near the tent platform. Thanks also to Robert Archibald & Joe Meehan for securing the funds to pay for the 2 bear boxes and the shipping!



SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Mat-Su Trails Foundation Grant Applications Open (ddline Dec 16): <https://matsutrails.org/ourgrants/>
- Several upcoming events planned for Kincaid trails (scroll down): <https://tinyurl.com/yew6p2j6>
- Valley state parks focused on what they have (Frontiersman): <https://tinyurl.com/2hw9u2xt>
- Nancy Lake Recreation Area Trail System Preservation Project: <https://tinyurl.com/y89bpmex>
- Mat-Su Winter Trails, Parks, and Recreation Information: <https://tinyurl.com/ft3aw7u4>
- DOT Seeking Comment on Bird to Gird trail resurfacing (ddline Dec 16): <https://tinyurl.com/yckc3ksd>
- New Trails, Park Projects, More (Anchorage Park Foundation newsletter): <https://tinyurl.com/2ncy8sbu>
- Jumbo Mine (McCarthy area hike): <https://fromrockstorivers.com/2022/11/25/jumbo-mine/>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Alaska State Parks Adds Two New Public Use Cabins in Kodiak: <https://tinyurl.com/4w6cn6jy>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

COMMENT SOUGHT ON TOLOVANA HOT SPRINGS PROPOSAL

COMMENT A business is proposing to hold day-use helicopter tours to a new hot tub near the existing Tolovana Hot Springs tubs and cabins.

The Bureau of Land Management is trying to reach Tolovana Hot Springs users to get information on relevant issues it should consider in an environmental evaluation of the proposal. Several have already been reached and the concept is proving to be controversial.

Comments should be submitted by December 15.

A hot tub would be brought in for the operation and tours would be done via helicopter with a maximum of three landings per day. To find out more, including how to comment, see this website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2021127/510>

Several people have expressed their disapproval with the plan on social media and elsewhere, including Tom DeLong, president of Tolovana Hot Springs Ltd, which operates tubs and cabins out there. KUAC recently did a story on the proposal and talked to DeLong as well as the person making the proposal. Read the story here: <https://tinyurl.com/234bj9fz>

Photo by Nathaniel Wilder/Alaska Public Media: Skiers make their way toward Tolovana Hot Springs in 2012



FAIRBANKS ASSEMBLY VOTES TO POSTPONE TRAILS PLAN UPDATE

In November, the Fairbanks Borough Assembly postponed voting on the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan update until February.

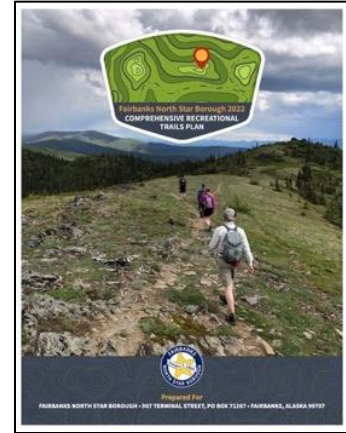
Several assembly members had concerns about how individual property owners might be affected by the plan. They have instructed borough staff to try to work out those issues. Had the assembly been

forced to vote on the plan last night, there's a good chance it would have failed. If the issues can be resolved satisfactorily – and no new issues arise that can't be addressed – then there's a good chance the plan will pass.

More than 30 people came to testify. While a small handful did raise concerns, almost everyone spoke in favor of the plan. Even most of those with concerns pointed out they overall supported the plan.

The plan is a culmination of more than two years of work and input by hundreds of local trail users and property owners. While the plan has been updated several times since its adoption in the 1980s, this is the first major update.

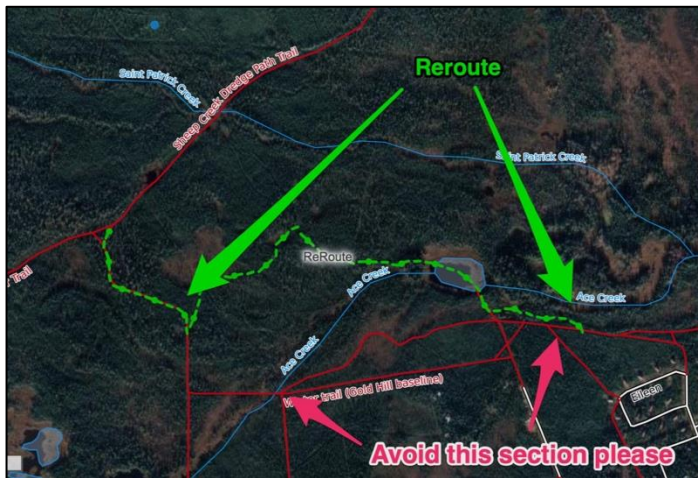
To find out more details, [including how you may be able to help](https://tinyurl.com/496k8rzh), see this blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/496k8rzh>



CONTROVERSIAL ACE LAKE TRAIL REROUTED ON GROUND

A trail that drew quite a bit of controversial attention at the public hearing for the Fairbanks Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan has been rerouted.

The trail, the Ace Lake Connector Trail, is north of Gold Hill Road. It is in a wet area and has been damaged by four-wheelers using it in summer.



The reroute goes to the north of the old trail reroute and crosses a lake. Volunteers worked to gain permission from nearby landowners for the reroute and then cut in the new trail. The lake crossing should deter much of the summer four-wheeler use in summer, though the old trail still exists on the ground so it is unclear how much of the problem the reroute will solve. Time will tell.

The trail was brought up several times during the plan adoption process. The Platting Board voted to remove it from the plan. The Planning Commission voted to have it changed from a Category B trail to

Category C. Category C trails – “neighborhood trails” – do not have any specific legal coverage in the plan, including no public easement guaranteed upon subdivision. The upside is that landowners have a great deal of control about how the trails are dealt with and who can access them. The downside is that without legal access guaranteed to the public, the borough can't really spend funds on them.

At the public hearing, William Walters, one of the landowners across which the trail runs, spoke extensively about his concerns of the damage. He wasn't entirely clear about what he wanted, but his concerns seemed to focus on getting the damage to stop and even repaired but without granting a public use easement. Walters put a gate and No Trespassing signs across the trail, which were torn down multiple times.

Another person, Natalie Lyon, also spoke at the meeting. She asked that the Ace Lake Connector Trail to be changed back to Category B so that public funds can be used to help solve access and use issues.

COMMENTS DUE ON FAIRBANKS AREA TRANSPORTATION PLANS

COMMENT Comments are due **December 20** on two plans by Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning. While both plans are about more than trails, both have trail components, mainly bike-ped paths.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the federally required 20-year long-range plan that is updated regularly to comply with the “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” planning process. The MTP lays out the long-range vision for the transportation system in the urbanized area of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, including Fairbanks and North Pole. This plan guides the transportation network improvements for motor vehicles, transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, and freight users. **To view the plan and provide comments, go to <https://fastplanning.us/mtpupdate/>.**

FAST Planning FFY23-27 Transportation Improvement Program is the four-year short-term transportation funding program for FAST Planning and represents a consensus among local, state, and regional officials as to which funded transportation improvements to implement. **To view the program and submit comments, go to: <https://fastplanning.us/tip/>.**

For more information about either plan, contact Jackson Fox, FAST Planning Executive Director (907/205-4276; email jackson.fox@fastplanning.us).

FAIRBANKS BORO PARKS AND REC OFFERS TRAILS REPORT

Looking for information about winter trails, especially reports on grooming and conditions? The Fairbanks area has a few resources including the borough, Trailforks, and the local ski club.

BOROUGH

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department is now doing a Trail Conditions Report that is updated every Thursday. The focus is mainly on Chena Lake and Tanana Lakes recreation area, but the page has links to other resources. From the page:

Your one-stop source for current winter trail conditions for cross-country skiing, snowmachining, fat-tire biking, snowshoeing, ice skating and walking in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Our team updates the winter trail conditions report weekly on Thursdays at 11AM throughout the winter season. Additional updates may be available. For additional information and trail maps, please visit this page: <https://fairbanksak.myrec.com/info/facilities/details.aspx?FacilityID=14955>



Check out the report here: <https://fairbanksak.myrec.com/info/facilities/details.aspx?FacilityID=14968>

SKI CLUB

The Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks also maintains a page that is skiing focused but includes information about multi-use trails.

The NSCF grooms the skiing-only trails at Birch Hill Recreation Area and does grooming reports for those on its website and Facebook page. It also maintains an “Other Local Trails” page that has short descriptions of the trails or trail systems and includes links to maps and other information, including where people can find grooming reports.

- NSCF Trails page (for grooming updates and other info): <https://www.nscfairbanks.org/trails/>

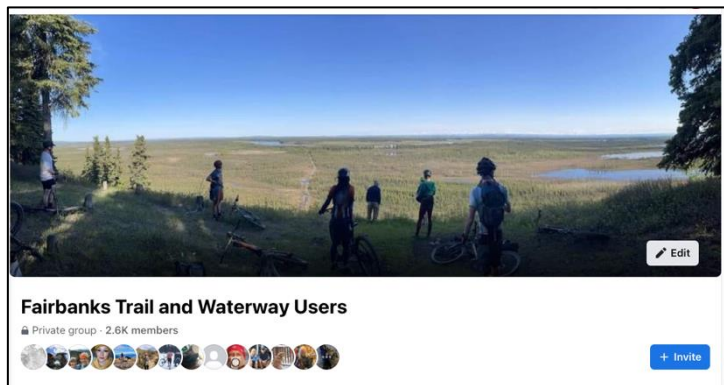
- NSCF Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NSCFairbanks/>
- NSCF Other Local Trails: <https://www.nscfairbanks.org/trails/other-local-trails/>
 - This includes websites from many places that have winter trail conditions including UAF, ADMA, Chena River State Recreation Area, and White Mountains National Recreation Area.

TRAILFORKS

Trailforks is a multi-use trail user website and smartphone app. It does not have all the trails in the Fairbanks area, but more are being added on a regular basis. In addition to showing people where trails are located, the service allows people to add their own trail status updates. Find out more at: <https://www.trailforks.com/>

FAIRBANKS FACEBOOK PAGE HAS GOOD TRAILS INFORMATION

If you're on Facebook, the Fairbanks Trail and Waterway Users group is a good place for local trails information. It's a private group, so you must apply for membership, but as long as you seem legit (i.e., you're not a Facebook spammer) you'll get accepted. Recently there's been posts on the Ace Lakes trails and Tolovana Hot Springs issues (see stories this issue). Posts are often included in the section below. The one below by Karen



Jensen is a bit longer than normal, but it brings up an interesting subject and generated quite a few replies. Go to the page here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1654728164805164/>

On a lovely hike today on the Ester Dome Single Track - trail is in great shape! - I was thinking about why the standard practice is for bikers to yield to walkers. This seems standard everywhere, and yet the number of cyclists who have ever yielded to me rather than the other way around, I can count on one hand. I hiked the Tahoe Rim Trail this past summer, 170 miles, and there are lots of places that are multi use and plenty of bikes. [I could gripe about the bikes that were on NO BIKES areas but that's a different post] In one 2 mile stretch going up Genoa Peak I encountered 50-100 bikes, I stopped counting at 50. Only a couple yielded to me. Most were courteous enough to slow down when they spotted me. But I am not going to play chicken with a bike hurtling downhill at me.

I'm not complaining, but instead proposing that maybe the standard should actually be that walkers yield to cyclists. Doesn't it just make a lot more sense? If we all accepted that as the common practice, then expectations would match reality.

I did see a fair number of horses too. Actually, there was a big group ride happening when I hiked out of Marlette (photo), so I had to step off trail for 100+ horses and riders. Obviously, cyclists and hikers need to yield for horses. It was a bit annoying after a while because it slowed me way down, but it's not the norm for groups to be that big. And it was fun to see them and chat with the riders.

Obviously, there are so few horses in the Fairbanks area that it just won't be a problem to yield to them, both hikers and cyclists. But I wonder if there is a rationale for why it's been decided that cyclists should yield to hikers, when that hardly ever happens. Is there some logic I'm missing?

And then, since this is "Fairbanks" Trails, I've added one from Stiles Creek last winter. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

Nov 27: Just thought I would post a quick trail report on the Colorado creek trail into Wolf Run Cabin in the whites as I don't think BLM has made it out that way yet this year... anyhow the trail was decent for skiing and fat biking, doable for a snowmachine going slow and not recommended for dog teams yet. Most noteworthy, one of the metal bridges between Colorado creek cabin and wolf run cabin has collapsed and will be a serious obstacle for dog teams and some snowmachines to navigate until the BLM trail crew makes a better bypass. The worst of the tussocks we're about 5-9 miles in from the trailhead and the last mile into wolf run cabin. The beaver creek crossing at Wolf Run had good ice and no overflow. There are some challenging sections of overflow creek crossing that skiers/bikers will want to walk and studded tracks for a snowmachine will help. some of the go around sections for sink holes on the Colorado creek trailhead are more challenging than they were last year as sink holes have expanded so mushers should be ready.



Collapsed bridge about half way from Colorado cabin to wolf run cabin. The go around as it is now will be very challenging for less capable snowmachines and all dog teams.

Nov 25: Noyes Slough - Hey, shout out to an underutilized winter trail/resource in Fairbanks, especially for folks living in town. The Noyes Slough offers great winter recreational opportunities in the heart of Fairbanks. It's also a great East-West connector for commuting if you want to get off the sidewalks. You can access the slough from a lot of neighborhoods in town, but the Fairbanks Lions Recreation Area (circled in red) also has great parking and access. Enjoy the fresh snow and happy trails!

Non-profit supporting Noyes Slough: <https://www.twatershed.org/noyes-slough>

Get involved with the Fairbanks Trail Plan:

<https://www.interioralaskatrails.org/2022/11/11/borough-trails-plan-postponed-to-address-concerns/>

NORDIC SKI CLUB OF FAIRBANKS

Nov 17: A skier recently ran into a strap across the trail on the White Bear Trail. Fortunately, our reports are that the skier was not seriously injured.

However, the reason the strap was across the trail was that our military troops were doing operations. The White Bear was closed to civilians that day. It was listed as closed on the military's recreation access website.

So, this is a good reminder to get your Sikes Act Permit and check in regularly to see when areas might be closed. Several trails at Birch Hill are on military land, including White Bear, White Cub, Sonot Connector, Sunnyside, Cliffside, and all singletrack trails.

Find out more about the Sikes Act Permit, including how to get one and how to check for closed areas, see here: www.nscfairbanks.org/2021/12/03/permits-required-for-using-some-birch-hill-trails/

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC is at Birch Hill Recreation Area.

Nov 21: Our Birch Hill ski chalet hours have changed! Please be advised before hitting the slopes; they will be CLOSED Thanksgiving (11/24) and open 10am-4pm on 11/25. ❄️ The warm-up hut 🔥 will remain open 24-7 as always. 🛷

BLM-WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Nov 17: ⚠️ Attention: BLM publishes new OHV limitations

New travel management plans for the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountains National Recreation Area are now in effect.

During the winter, snow cover protects sensitive resources, so few changes were needed for winter season management. Except for a few non-motorized routes, all the BLM-managed lands in both planning areas will be open to cross-country snowmobile travel during the winter season.



Summer season changes in the new TMPs are more diverse and attempt to protect resources while providing for the wide range of recreation experiences sought by public land users. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel will be limited to designated routes in portions of the White Mountains NRA and in much of the Steese NCA. The White Mountains plan relies

heavily on the pre-existing summer route network, with few changes to routes or where summer cross-country OHV travel is allowed. The Steese plan restricts cross-country OHV travel for much of the NCA and designates a new BLM-managed summer OHV route network.

👉 Read the full news release at <http://ow.ly/10AN50LGz76>

INTERIOR LINKS

- First Cabin Trip of the Season (by fatbike): <https://tinyurl.com/3myz24kf>
- Tok to Tok via Dawson, the Yukon, and Eagle! (by bike and packraft): <https://tinyurl.com/yckkdb6b>

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

TRAIL MIX, INC.

Nov 29: There's nothing better than a beautiful hike followed by a relaxing cabin stay and with new cabins coming to Juneau, more of us will get to enjoy them. The catch? Trails are not a part of the plan...yet! That's why this Giving Tuesday we're raising \$12,000 to work on trails to cabins. 🛡️ Will you pitch in and help build the trails to get there? [Head to bit.ly/juneautrailstocabins](http://bit.ly/juneautrailstocabins) to donate.



Nov 28: SheJumpers + full day of moving gravel + brushing = 🍊 🍊 🍊

Sunny winter days are bringing back memories of warm summer days on the trail. ☀️ Over the course of the season, SheJumps volunteers committed over 100 hours of their time to improve the Outer Point Trail! 🛠️ We know Outer Point needs more work, but don't worry: we're working hard all winter to prepare for big improvements during the field season.

Stay tuned: we're counting on you to help us make a big impact on Juneau's trails this summer. 🌲



Nov 23: We are so thankful for the Volunteer Trail Maintenance Team. 🙌 How many hours do you think the VTMT contributed this year? 🤔



Formed in 2017 by just a few friends, the VTMT is now a powerhouse of trail work, and in 2022, they worked an astounding 2259 hours improving Juneau's trails!

That included 1,667 hours on Treadwell Ditch, where they built bridge approaches at Eagle Creek and Neilson Creek (a collaboration with crew) as well as improved half a mile of trail tread. They also volunteered on Lena Point, Herbert Glacier, Windfall Lake, and Montana Creek.

Thanks for another amazing season!

November 1: The VTMT is at it again on Treadwell Ditch! 🍊

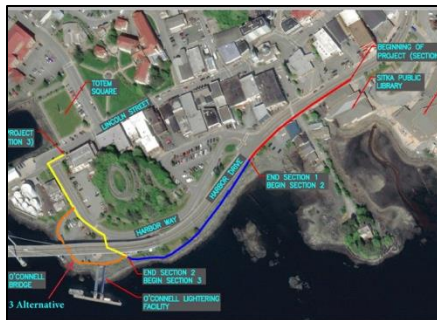
Our hardworking Volunteer Trail Maintenance Team completed another major project before the snow started coming down. ❄️ To make the Eagle Creek bridge a smoother ride or hike, they rebuilt the approach leading up to it. ⚡

This massive improvement involved building large turnpikes to stabilize the gravel. To build the turnpikes, the crew harvested trees from the area, removed the bark to prolong the lifespan, and pinned them together. Then, they filled it all up with gravel which became compacted down. Smooth travel ahead! 🚲 🛠️



Thank you VTMT! You are all AWESOME! 🥳

SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.



Nov 30: The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, in coordination with the City and Borough of Sitka, is proposing to improve accessibility to the Sitka National Historical Park and downtown Sitka by extending the current Sitka Seawalk. This extension would continue from the Sitka Public Library to the O'Connell Lightering Facility and onto Totem Square. The project would guide visitor and resident pedestrian traffic through the community and provide expanded recreation opportunities.

Preliminary design and engineering are underway. **Project info and the opportunity to provide public comment is also available through the project website www.cityofsitka.com/SitkaSeawalkPhaseII**

For more information, contact Chris Mertl, Corvus Design, at (907) 988-9000 or Kelli Cropper, City and Borough of Sitka Project Manager, at (907) 747-1888.

Nov 18: Sometimes it's too nice to stay behind a desk.

Today we repaired some tread on the Mt Verstovia Trail that had been ripped out by a falling tree.

Nov 3: As part of our trail maintenance work at Sea Lion Cove this fall, we had the great fortune of receiving helicopter support from the US Coast Guard. Their helicopter crews used the occasion as training while transporting lumber and gravel to project sites. Since we were already at the beach, we filled up a helicopter bag with beach flotsom that hikers had piled near the trailhead and the USCG flew it back to Sitka. In total, we disposed of over 600 pounds of trash!



A big thanks to the USCG flight crews for the incredibly valuable assistance and for going the extra mile to keep our beaches clean!

Nov 2: The Indian River (Kaasda Heen) Trail was just ranked as one of the "10 Absolute Best Hiking Trails in Alaska" by OutdoorGearWeb.com!

<https://outdoorgearweb.com/the-10-absolute-best-hiking-trails-in-alaska/>

SOUTHEAST LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Lawsuit: Alaska attempts to claim portions of most-visited tourist attraction: <https://tinyurl.com/ybsv49rs>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SUBMIT PHOTOS FOR NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL PHOTO CONTEST

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

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

To read more about National Recreation Trails see here: <https://www.americantrails.org/national-recreation-trails>

To read more about the contest see here: <https://tinyurl.com/58a3xz7v>

From American Trails newsletter

PITCH IN ON CREATING A TRAIL FUNDING CLEARINGHOUSE

CONTRIBUTE American Trails needs your help! **Please fill out the following survey** identifying the Federal, State, Local, and private funding sources your organization or agency has used to fund trail projects. This

effort will help us to create a Trail Funding Clearinghouse that can support new and growing members of the Trails Community. <https://tinyurl.com/yp3wr3nw>

From American Trails newsletter

APPLY NOW TO BE A 2023 NEXTGEN TRAIL LEADER

APPLY American Hiking Society is now accepting applications for our sixth class of NextGen Trail Leaders. Are you an advocate or know young advocates (age 18-40) to join AHS for a year of advocacy and stewardship collaboration? Apply now or share this opportunity with your community to help us find five dynamic individuals from across the country to advance public land stewardship, trails advocacy, and support voices that are inclusive of all trail users.

Applications can be submitted through December 4, 2022.

<https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/next-gen-apply/>

From American Hiking Society newsletter

INTERNATIONAL TRAILS SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN NEVADA IN APRIL

American Trails and the Professional TrailBuilders Association (PTBA) have joined forces to co-host the International Trails Summit (ITS) in Reno, Nevada during the week of April 17, 2023. ITS is a collaborative effort of the 25th International Trails Symposium and Training Institute and the Sustainable Trails Conference. This combined, high-impact event will convene a diverse trail and outdoor community to learn, build relationships, and find solutions to the challenges of developing and elevating outdoor recreation opportunities for all. The joint conference will also feature the World Trails Network - Hub for the Americas.

This exciting new collaboration is a gathering of trail and outdoor recreation enthusiasts and professionals representing all corners of the professional trails and outdoor recreation industry. The summit will include more than 60 educational sessions covering a broad range of issues including nationally and internationally prominent presenters, informative and interactive workshops, a state-of-the-art Exhibit Hall, and a wide array of national training leaders.

Find out more at: <https://tinyurl.com/3pfkh226>

AMERICAN TRAILS, FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCE NEW GRANT

APPLY American Trails recently announced a new funding opportunity: The National Forest System Legacy Roads and Trails Fund, aka the Legacy Trails Grant Program.

The goal of the program is to support projects that restore, protect, and maintain crucial watersheds on our national forests and grasslands. American Trails is administering this grant program with awards up to \$100K per project. The program opens to applications in early October. **The deadline to apply is December 15.**



The Forest Service identifies and prioritizes watershed acres or areas where Forest Service roads and trails may impact water quality in streams and water bodies. Grant administrators will be looking to fund projects that restore fish and aquatic organism passage, improve trail resiliency, preserve trail access, decommission unauthorized trails, and convert unneeded Forest Service roads to trails. Protecting threatened,

endangered, and sensitive species, and community water sources are among the top priorities for projects that improve and maintain trail access. Emergency operations, such as evacuation routes during wildfires, floods or other natural disasters also benefit from this program.

Find out more: www.americantrails.org/legacy-trails-program

SAVE THE DATE! HIKE THE HILL HAPPENS FEBRUARY 12-17, 2023

PARTICIPATE Celebrating its 26th year, Hike the Hill is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and Partnership for the National Trails System to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders including: trails funding, public lands management and conservation, equitable access, and other top priority issues that sustain trails and improve access to public lands. Find out more here: <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/#hike-the-hill>



From American Hiking Society newsletter

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/training/calendar

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": www.americantrails.org/newsletter

VOLUNTEER

- American Hiking Society's Alternative Break: <https://tinyurl.com/27dkaaay>
- Conservation Volunteers International Program newsletter (Nov): <https://tinyurl.com/bdfzfy6f>

FUNDING

- FOX Factory Trail Trust (**applications reviewed quarterly**): <https://tinyurl.com/bdfjevrd>
- Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OHVs, **quarterly deadlines**): <https://yamahaoai.com/>
- Nat Forest Found Matching Awards Prog (**info wbinar Dec 8; ddline Jan 23**): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- All-terrain wheelchairs arrive at U.S. parks: 'This is life-changing': <https://tinyurl.com/4da6umac>
- Trail Designers Using Hubs to Make Mountain Bike Rides More Social: <https://tinyurl.com/bds58dz9>
- AKC offers tips for hitting the trail with your dog: <https://tinyurl.com/ye3a4vve>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Apple rolls out iPhone emergency SOS satellite alert service: <https://tinyurl.com/ub46cj9s>

The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference the first Tuesday of every other month from 5-7pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us. 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 seven days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at fbxtrails@gmail.com