



NEWSLETTER

JAN
2024

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

ALASKA ALPINE ADVENTURES HELPS TRAILS THROUGH 1% PROGRAM

We are excited to announce that Alaska Alpine Adventures has donated \$5,000 to Alaska Trails through its commitment to “1% for the Planet.”



Each year, businesses like Alaska Alpine Adventures give 1% of their annual sales directly to our partner non-profits. We are grateful for their generosity. And it came at the perfect time!

We surpassed our \$10,000 end of year donation goal and received the \$10,000 match by ConocoPhillips Alaska! Alaska Alpine Adventures generously donated their \$5,000 as another match. Donations were doubled and we met our new goal of

\$40,000 to build more trails in our great state, including the Alaska Long Trail!

Find out more about Alaska Alpine Adventures here: <https://alaskaalpineadventures.com/>

Find out more about “1% for the Planet” here: <https://www.onepercentfortheplanet.org/>

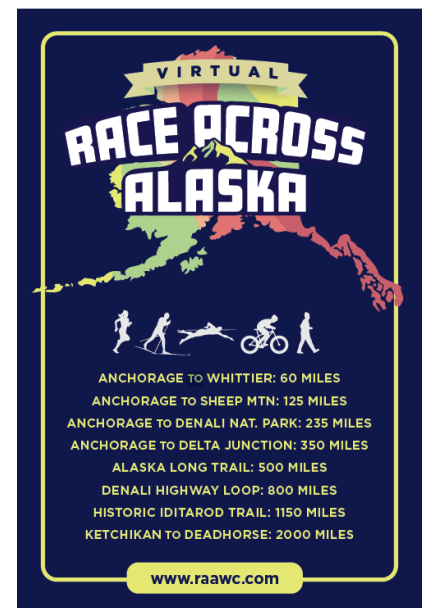
STILL TIME TO ENTER THE VIRTUAL RACE ACROSS ALASKA

ENTER/DONATE Alaska Trails is once again EXCITED to be part of the Virtual Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge!

Our board and staff have signed up and have already hit the trails starting December 21 when the race kicked off! In addition to inspiring healthy activity in the dark months, this year the race has already raised over \$40,000 for non-profits, including Alaska Trails, the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, and Challenge Alaska.

There's still time to join the fun! The virtual race began on December 21 but you can still sign up and log your miles – we hope you will. Registration and more info at: www.RAAWC.com

Here's how it works. You 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). You will have the ability to log your miles, track your progress, collect virtual badges, so how you rank up to others on the leader board daily. You can invite other to this challenge to help you to stay motivated all winter long.



TRAIL TALES BRINGS YOU MORE FUN TRAIL STORIES

ATTEND The next edition of Trail Tales will be on January 23 and will benefit both Alaska Trails and the Chugach Park Fund.

Alaska Trails runs the Trail Tales storytelling series as a fundraiser for itself while also partnering with a different community organization for each event. In the spirit of Arctic Entries, storytellers share seven-minute stories about their trail experiences, adventures, and life in general. Our 2024 Trail Tales events will be held at the Anchorage Museum and tickets cost \$20.



Trail Tales will start at 7 p.m. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale now. Put the other Trail Tales events on your calendar: February 20, March 19, and April 16. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alaska-trails.org/trail-tales

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

DONATE Giving back to the trails you love is easy! Help maintain, improve, and build new trails for you and your fellow Alaskans by choosing Alaska Trails for your annual Pick. Click. Give. Donations. When you file for your PFD, choose Alaska Trails to ensure the trails in our backyards are safe, sustainable, and fun for all and that we can complete the Alaska Long Trail, a world-class trail system connecting Seward to Fairbanks!



Giving through your PFD is a secure and easy way to make a donation. **When you file for your PFD online, you will be given the opportunity to select a non-profit to receive a portion of 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.” visit: www.pickclickgive.org/

Link to the Alaska Trails “PCG” page: www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails

ALASKA TRAILS HIRING FOR SEASONAL TRAIL CREW POSITIONS

APPLY Alaska Trails is hiring for two crews planned for seasonal trail work in 2024. Trail crews will work in Chugach State Park and the Chugach National Forest.

Trail crew members and leaders will play a pivotal role in trail maintenance and construction projects in Southcentral Alaska. Duties include daily hiking in steep, rocky terrain, structure work, and using hand and power tools to maintain and construct sustainable trails.



More information for all the positions and application instructions at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/jobs>

ALASKA TRAILS THANKS OUTGOING BOARD PRESIDENT LIBBY KUGEL



We are grateful to Libby Kugel for her service on the Alaska Trails Board of Directors since 2018, most recently as president. She has brought a great deal of organizational know-how and intelligence that has been a great asset for the board. We will continue to cross paths with Libby in her role as the Communications and Administration Manager at Great Land Trust as well as her volunteer position as the Chair of the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB). Libby is an avid trail user, and we wish her the best!

SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

December 12

We had such a wonderful time at Trail Tales last week! Check out this article about the evening of storytelling: <http://tinyurl.com/23ptkhpt>. And if you want to join us at our next Trail Tales event, visit: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trail-tales>

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SUPPORT STATE, NATIONAL TRAILS BY PURCHASING PARK PASSES

BUY A PASS Many of the great trails in Alaska and the rest of the United States are in state and national parks. Buying a pass helps support these agencies even if you never use the pass. Of course, if you do use the pass, then so much the better. That means you are out having fun!

- Alaska State Parks annual pass: Support state parks during a time of tight state budgets. Of course, your parking is then 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>
- 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: www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm



JOIN POW, CHANGE YOUR DIET TO HELP SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE

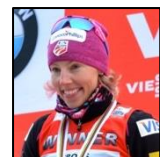
JOIN, ACT Climate changes affects everyone, especially winter sports enthusiasts like snowmachiners, mushers, cross-country skiers, and fatbikers.

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.

Here is something you can do right now to help make a difference.

Join “Protect Our Winters”

“Protect Our Winters” is a group of outdoor people organized to “protect the places and lifestyles they love from climate change.” Several Alaska athletes are part of the group, including biker Lael Wilcox and cross-country skiers Gus Schumacher and Kikkan Randall.



POW was founded in 2007 by pro snowboarder Jeremy Jones. Jones saw that many of the resorts he'd counted on for good snowboarding were closed more often due to lack of snow. He felt a need to act, but he couldn't find any organizations focused on mobilizing the snow sports community on climate. So, Protect Our Winters was born.

The group is made up of pro athletes, individuals, resorts, brand partners and other outdoor enthusiasts. It organizes for lobbying and other actions to help fight climate change.

You can help the group by donating and/or joining. If you join, you can sign up to be a volunteer: <https://protectourwinters.org/>



Photos: Top - Kikkan Randall by Fouganthin, bottom – Lael Wilcox from POW profile page

Take a personal action

Eat less commercial meat, especially beef. Unfortunately, commercial meat production is a big contributor to greenhouse gases. Forbes has an article about it: <https://tinyurl.com/yssz3uun>

On the bright side, wild meat is as natural as you can get. And trails are a great way to go hunting!

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.

GROUP ADVOCATES FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF PUBLIC LANDS

JOIN Responsible Stewardship is a volunteer 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering stewardship together for the betterment of our public lands, outdoor spaces and communities for everyone to enjoy responsibly. The group does this through examples and through "Education Through Action."

The group does this through examples and through "Education Through Action."

- Consider your digital impact before posting on social media
- Use broader location geotags and hashtags like states or countries vs specific locations like parks, mountains, lakes.. etc.. Or use NO geotag location at all.
- Consider the following before you post. Is there adequate: parking, restrooms, roads, and enforcement?

If your answer to any of these is NO, then choose no geotag on that location.

Castner Glacier along the Richardson Highway is a good example of an overused, under-serviced area for parking, bathrooms etc. It's a wonderful place, but parking along the highway has at times made for some dangerous situations and people have gone to the glacier very underprepared, especially in winter.

So, please think before you post and tag.

See more of the group's ethics here: <https://www.responsiblestewardship.org/ethics>

Find out more about the group here: <https://www.responsiblestewardship.org/>



SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

DENALI HIGHWAY TRAIL CLUB

December 14

The Denali Hwy Trail club would like to offer our sincere condolences to those involved in the recent snowmachine/dogsled tragedies on the Denali Hwy. Those of us that live, and make our living out here, are saddened and discouraged that this had to happen at all, let alone in our back yard.



As we move forward from this, we can keep pointing fingers at each user group and get nowhere, or we can decide where we go from here, and how to keep this from happening in the future.

We are planning on starting the grooming program first of Jan, and I believe that will help by making a wider trail where users are not stuck riding in the same trench. We are having signs made for both trails heads warning users that they are not the only ones out there.

All lodges along the highway, have also committed to help, by verbally reiterating to our customers the importance of caution while running the road.

Snowmachiners:

- At night and in bad weather, please do not outride your headlight.
- Also, Do not drink and drive!!
- Understand that when meeting a dogteam head on, the dogs will most often veer towards the machine. So if you are not stopped or close to it, this can make things very exciting for both mushers and machine riders.
- Dog teams will most likely be on the inside of the corners so be prepared for that.

Dogmushers:

- You need to be lit up, and at least your lead dog needs to have a light on it. Please do not use a red light on your leader as this looks like a taillight, and riders may assume you are going to same direction as them, instead of closing the distance.

As Jeff King pointed out yesterday, "this is not a war", we need to work together to make sure these incidents never happen again.

Alan Echols, Denali Hwy Trail Club

Photo from Bureau of Land Management Alaska

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

December 20

There's a Facebook page for Alaska low-tech trail groomers: www.facebook.com/groups/alaskatrailpackers/



December 26

After a couple of bad recent incidents with snowmachines hitting dog teams, a couple of groups have started a fundraiser to provide lighted collars for the lead dogs of mushing teams. Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/4xmv8wck>

December 26

Here's a useful resource on "How To Pass a Dog Team On The Trail." While the article doesn't include bikes, the same advice for skiers would apply to bikers. <https://stinkypup.net/2016/12/23/how-to-pass-a-dog-team-on-the-trail/>

December 8

This graphic focuses just on cyclists and walkers/runners, but it's a good reminder that we should ALL be aware of how our actions affect others. If you are doing something that will ruin another person's experience on the trails, please reconsider. Sometimes it can't be avoided, but if it can, then please avoid it. Other activities include using any wheeled vehicles on trails, going too fast around blind corners, and letting your dog run loose or leaving your dog's poop on the trail when you could have stopped to move it off.

If we all try to out-polite each other, we can all have a great time on the trails!



ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

December 1

The outdoor recreation is primed for takeoff! We're tracking the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor



Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE) which was introduced earlier this week in the US House of Representatives with strong bipartisan - and we hear, bicameral - support. In a nutshell, the EXPLORE Act would: Enable permit streamlining to ease burdens on outfitters and guides and improve access to outdoor experiences; improve access to recreation on public lands and waters; ensure access to green spaces in underserved communities; develop, improve, and complete long range trails; and invest in rural economic development.

December 1

Haines leading the way in understanding that investing in outdoor recreation returns long-lasting dividends for the economic, mental, and physical well being for one of Alaska's many charming small, rural towns. This 5-minute video from the EPA's Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program illustrates the point. With Haines Economic Development Corp - HEDC, Haines Huts and Trails, Chilkoot Indian Association, Haines Borough Government, Haines Visitor Center. Contact us if you'd like to learn more about how outdoor recreation can be an economic development strategy for your community.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrVhh9bMijg>

FAIRBANKS PADDLERS

December 14

COMMENT UPDATE: As a result of public input, the deadline for comments has been extended to February 1, 2024.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation posted public notices of public scoping for possible updates and revisions to DNR regulations involving PWCs (personal watercraft or jet skis) and UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles or drones) on November 15, 2023. The current deadline for public input is December 29. Please read the letter from Fairbanks Paddlers president, Don Pendergrast, who learned of these notices as a member of the Citizens Advisory Board for Alaska State Parks, Northern Region posted on our website: <http://tinyurl.com/3m8asesd>



STATEWIDE LINKS

- Hike Castner Glacier Ice Cave Trail: <https://andreakuipoabroad.com/hike-castner-glacier-ice-cave/>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Outdoor Rec Trails Advisory Board meets in January for RTP, LWCF: <http://notice.alaska.gov/213480>
- Alaska Among Top States in US Outdoor Recreation Economy: <https://tinyurl.com/ycx7v567>
- Confluence Heading to the Anchorage Museum in April: <http://tinyurl.com/ymcs93kv>

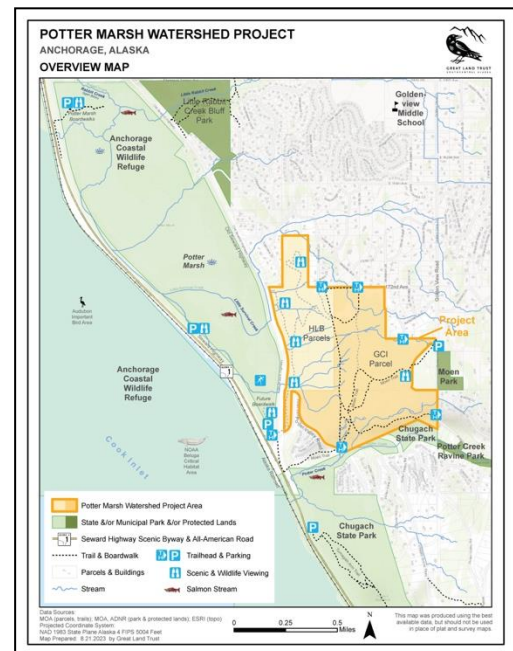
SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

LAND TRUST WORKING ON 300-ACRE PARK NEAR POTTER MARSH

Great Land Trust (GLT), with the support of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), is working to create a new 300-acre park immediately adjacent to Potter Marsh. The new Potter Marsh Watershed Park, bordered by Golden View Drive to the east and Old Seward Highway to the west, will be owned, operated, and maintained by the MOA Parks and Recreation Department.

With several miles of basic trails already in place, nearby parking available, and stunning views of Potter Marsh, the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge, and Turnagain Arm, the park is poised to become a popular destination for recreators and nature enthusiasts from across Anchorage. Once the land is in MOA ownership, the Parks and Recreation Department will begin a master planning process to determine additional park amenity and infrastructure needs.

In addition to creating a new area for recreation, this project will conserve the streams and wetlands on the hillside above Potter Marsh. Streams on the property provide an important source of fresh water to Potter Marsh, which sees over 200,000 visitors annually. Protecting these resources



helps ensure that the critical habitat of the many salmon, migratory birds, and other wildlife that use Potter Marsh and its surrounding lands will remain healthy.

For the past three years, GLT has been leading the project negotiations and fundraising activities, securing over \$4 million in resources, with additional fundraising efforts underway. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded two National Coastal Wetlands grants for the project. The US Forest Service has awarded a Community Forest Program grant to the project, the first award of its kind in Alaska.

In the coming months, GLT will bring the project to the Anchorage Assembly as an ordinance to accept a donation of the new land. Land acquisition is expected to be completed in early 2025, followed by a park master planning process.

The preceding comes from a Great Land Trust press release. See the entire release, photos, and a larger map here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8nhxhn>

See an Anchorage Daily News story on the project here: <https://tinyurl.com/3x8xpw6u>

MAT-SU FOUNDATION GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE IN JANUARY

APPLY The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation wants to fund your next trail, park, or outdoor recreation project.

The Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation partners with organizations and local governments on projects and efforts that expand and enhance the valley's network of trails and parks.

Submit your grant application by January 3, for the next review of grant applications. Contact info@matsutrails.org for any questions or to discuss your next project.

- Learn More About MSF Grants: <https://matsutrails.org/ourgrants/>
- MSF Grant Guidelines: <https://tinyurl.com/bdh7j692>

NATIONAL FOREST COMMITTEE WORK INCLUDES TRAIL PROJECTS

APPLY The Chugach National Forest is recruiting to fill 15 committee member positions on the Kenai Peninsula-Anchorage Borough Resource Advisory Committees (RAC). Committee members serve a four-year appointment and meet one to two times a year to review and recommend submitted projects that benefit national forest system lands, monitor ongoing projects, and provide advice to the Forest Service.



Past projects funded by RAC committees include cabin improvements, streambank stability, and trail and road reconstruction and maintenance.

Those who desire to apply to member positions must reside within the region of Alaska in which the committee has jurisdiction. By law, members are divided into three groups, and each member represents a particular set of interests. Individuals may nominate themselves or others who may meet the criteria.

These are not paid positions, however, travel and per diem expenses to the meeting location may be reimbursed. **Click here to apply:** <http://tinyurl.com/mr35ca4p>. For more information, contact Carlos.DeLaTorre@USDA.Gov.

From What's Up? by Peg Tileston

KACHEMAK BAY TRAILS WORKING GROUP TO MEET IN JANUARY

ATTEND The Homer - Kachemak Bay Citizen Advisory Board will meet January 10 at the Islands and Ocean's seminar room on January 10 at 5:30pm. This will be a hybrid meeting. You may join in person or join virtually. **A trails working group will meet on the same day at the same location at 4pm. This group discusses all things trails related for Kachemak Bay State Park.** For more information, contact Jason Okuly at 907-435-7595 or email Jason.Okuly@alaska.gov. Here's the link for joining virtually: <http://tinyurl.com/3ccw5abp>



From What's Up? by Peg Tileston

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALASKA

November 30

You may see these new signs up around Campbell Tract! This is an effort to improve visibility about an important issue on Campbell Tract.



Safety is a top priority for BLM Alaska, and as we move into winter recreation on the Campbell Tract it's important to practice safe pet etiquette.

Dogs and domesticated animals are required to be on leash at all times while recreating on Campbell Tract. This is for your safety, other visitors' safety, wildlife safety, and for the safety of your pet(s). E-collars are considered leashes for recreation on Campbell Tract, which is consistent with management on the neighboring Far North Bicentennial Park. BLM Law Enforcement Rangers are enforcing this citable offense. Please leash your pet.

Please see the following resources for more information about recreation on Campbell Tract and surrounding Far North Bicentennial Park.

- https://www.muni.org/Departments/health/Admin/animal_control/pages/leash.aspx
- <https://www.blm.gov/visit/campbell-tract>

CHUGACH MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDERS

December 14

This is what trail building looks like!

Thanks so much to the dozen trail supporters that showed up to the final public hearing last night. The West Beach Lake Trail was unanimously approved by the Urban Design Commission. Construction on this four-mile gravel trail connecting Chugiak High School to the inlet is planned to start summer 2024.

EAGLE RIVER FAT TIRE RIDES

Clark Saunders > December 18



PSA... one our newest members of CMBR and an official Groomer under our Alaska State Park permit, with his personal Snowdog purchase with his own funds. Put in a double wide track from Briggs Bridge to just shy of Narnia ice bridge. Get out there and enjoy! Thanks, VS!

MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

December 1

Attention all you hikers, bikers, skiers and more: Looking for a good gift idea or just simply tired of having to deal with the hassles of paying for the \$5 Day Use fee. Consider a 2024 Mat-Su Borough trailhead parking pass. The price for one is \$40 or buy two for \$70. If you use MSB trails just 8 times next year, the annual pass pays for itself. You can purchase one or more online which will be mailed to you or in person at select locations. If you purchase your pass online, print off your receipt and display it on the dash until yours arrives in the mail. Shipping is 7-10 days.

ONLINE:

<https://ecommerce.matsugov.us/Pages/CD/AnnualParking.aspx>

IN PERSON:

- 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



November 30

New electronic pay kiosks have been installed at the Government Peak Recreation Area and Lazy Mountain Trailhead. The borough will be doing a 1 month change over from envelopes to electronic payments during the month of December.



The kiosks are currently up and running and trail users can currently pay using either the kiosk or the pay pipe at both facilities. The electronic kiosks will be the sole way to purchase daily parking passes at the Government Peak Recreation Area and Lazy Mountain beginning January 1, 2024. The kiosks only accept debit/credit cards and cash will no longer be accepted beginning January 1, 2024. The Kiosks are located at GPRA, Lazy Mountain, Jim Creek, and Butte trailheads.

November 30

Save the Date! 📅 Tell your friends!



We're hosting a ❄️ Winter Discovery Day ❄️ on Saturday, February 24, 2024

This event aims to connect locals to winter resources in our area. We'll have gear demos, activities, prizes and more. If an organization or business you're affiliated with is interested in being involved, please fill out our event interest form online here: <https://forms.gle/JasYfEqvixXGPEZZ7>

Revel Treks & Tours is coordinating this event. Don't hesitate to contact them directly with any questions.

ALASKA HUTS ASSOCIATION

December 9

Consider a donation to Alaska Huts this December for the Hut Fund! All Hut Fund donations directly benefit the Lars Spurkland Hut project at Spencer Glacier, which Alaska Huts has been working on for several years. We need your help to make the hut happen. Imagine fat biking out to Spencer Glacier and staying in a World-class hut for the night!

👁️ : @renaissance.cyclist



HOMER SAFE TRAILS

December 20

SAFE TRAILS TRAPPING MAP: The map on this webpage can be zoomed-in on to see where traps have been reported. Be Aware: keep your pets & kids close - Traps are legal on most public trails in Alaska, November thru March. <https://www.akwildlife.org/safetrails>

VALDEZ ADVENTURE ALLIANCE

December 3



We're proud to announce we've been chosen as a recipient of @athleticbrewing's Two for the Trails grant program! Athletic Brewing Company's love for the great outdoors is why they created their Two For the Trails program, where they donate up to \$2 million annually to help protect, preserve, and maintain local trails.

With these funds, we plan to complete the current phase of clearing work on Gold Creek Trail over the summer of 2024.

HOMER TRAILS ALLIANCE

December 10

Homer Trails Alliance would like to express abundant gratitude to The Homer Foundation for a \$5000 grant we received this month!

This grant was made possible by the Opportunity Fund, an unrestricted endowed fund managed by the Homer Foundation. HTA plans to use these funds to purchase an ATV that will be used for mowing trails and will be a huge help hauling supplies to our trail improvement and building projects.

Homer Foundation has distributed over \$350,000 in grants and scholarships on the Southern Peninsula this year and we are so thankful to live in a community that gives back so generously.

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- BLM: Leash pets or risk a citation at Anchorage's Campbell Tract: <https://tinyurl.com/eesjdvs>
- An Anchorage trailhead upgrade: <http://tinyurl.com/3x9jnxwb>

SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Mat-Su Transportation Fair: <http://notice.alaska.gov/213701>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

FAIRBANKS PARKS AND REC WINTER TRAILS CHALLENGE IS LIVE

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department is hosting another Winter Trails Challenge.

The sign list was revealed in late December for this popular ongoing event, which is free and open to anyone. Participants need to be registered to be eligible for prizes and awards. See "Trails Office page" link below to register.



The Fairbanks Trails Challenge is an all-ages, all-abilities, outdoor scavenger hunt designed to get you out with your friends and family to explore our wonderful local trails, both new and familiar. Each summer and winter season, Parks Department staff temporarily installs special signs in secret locations along a dozen or so local trails. While the signs are up, we invite everyone to visit the trails and try and find the signs. Along the way we hope you have a chance to learn new skills, see new places, and make positive memories.

Participants who find at least ten signs during the event can win prizes from local sponsors and the coveted Trailblazer Award. Participants under the age of 10 can find at least five signs to win the Junior Trailblazer Award, and seniors aged 60+ can find 5 to get win the Sourdough Trailblazer Award! To claim

- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/313549044989446/313549048322779/>
- Trails Office page: <http://tinyurl.com/mr4zr7ec>

Photo from Evangeline Orr from the Facebook Event

PROPOSED MURPHY DOME WIND FARM CREATES CONCERNS

COMMENT If you recreate on trails and roads in the Murphy Dome area, a proposed wind farm project will be of interest to you.

The Shovel Creek Wind LLC has applied for a lease from the state to install wind turbines and other facilities along ridges in the Murphy Dome area. A public comment period is open until 5 p.m., Monday, January 29.

This project will have negative impacts, such as changing the viewshed and developing currently raw land, but it will also have positive impacts such as a projected lower community power costs and a reduction of fossil fuel emissions by the Golden Valley Electric Association. The project has caused a lot of heated discussion in Fairbanks.

Whether you support it, oppose it, or support it with caveats, you should comment.
<http://notice.alaska.gov/213611>

To find out more see the rest of this story here: <http://tinyurl.com/568j29d2>

Eric Troyer photo: A biker passes beneath a wind turbine at Eva Creek Wind Farm



LETTER SHOWS HOW LAND TRUST WORK SAVES TRAILS

DONATE The Interior Alaska Land Trust is not a trails-specific group, but the work it does preserving greenspace also saves a lot of trails. And the group understands that when people have an opportunity to use trails in greenspace areas, they become more invested in keep that land as greenspace. Saving land equals saving trails equals saving land.

IALT board member Seth Adams recently wrote a great fundraising letter for the group, showing how the group has saved trails in the Fairbanks area. Read it here:

<http://tinyurl.com/24t32d96>

If you agree with Adams, please consider donating to the group. Here's a link to the group's website: <https://interioraklandtrust.org/>



SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

December 19

The Fairbanks Borough Assembly unanimously passed an important trails-related resolution at its meeting last Thursday. The resolution (Resolution No. 2023 – 44) added a long list of projects to the Capital Improvement Program list. Many of those projects are trail related.

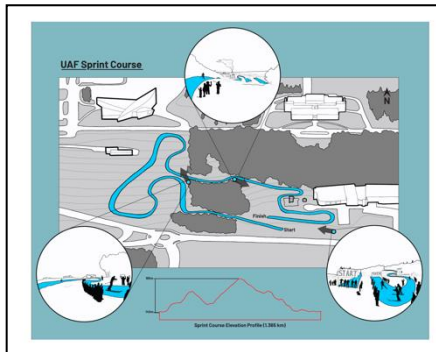
Thank you to everyone who advocated for the resolution and/or the projects in the resolution. While passage of the resolution does not guarantee any of the projects will happen, it is an important step in that direction.

This post has information on the resolution and the trails-related projects that were included:

<http://tinyurl.com/4uete36c>

December 17

An interesting proposal to create a trail system on the main south-facing slope at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is making its way through the university's planning process. At last report, the proposal has neither been approved nor denied.



The main focus of the proposal is to create a ski trail system that could be used for practice and competition by the UAF Nanook ski team. However, the proposal has been devised to take into account other trail users and seasons.

The proposal also has several "layers," each with increasing cost and impact on the area, which would be between the Student Recreation Center and the UA administrative building.

For those interested in finding out more, a copy of the proposal can be found here. I do not know of any opportunities for public comment on this. <https://tinyurl.com/4ayvux2n>

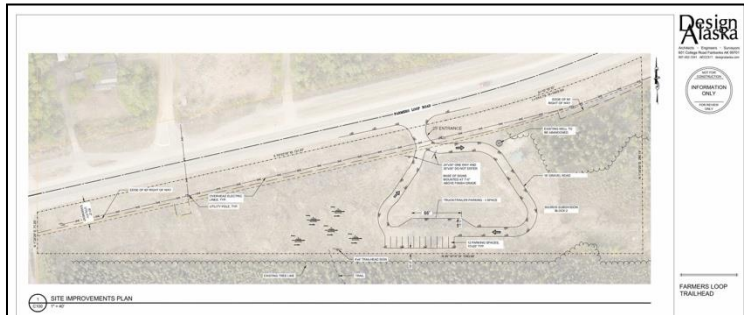
December 6

New trailhead for the ADMA Creamer's Refuge trails. And the Interior Alaska Land Trust is looking for volunteers to help keep the trailhead plowed.

Shared from Stan Justice

Interior Alaska Land Trust has provided a new trailhead for the ADMA trails. It is adjacent to the parking at Midnight Sun road. It is a little hard to spot. It is across from Shuros Drive and a tad W of Bible Baptist Church. 1341 Farmers Loop Road might work on your phone/car app. We are trying to get snowplowing set up. Open for use!

Few people probably care about these messy details but in the conditional use process the FNSB planning commission made the new parking area "non-motorized" even though the ADMA trails allow snowmachines. The entrance point has been upgraded to block snowmachines. Snowmachines can still use Midnight Sun access. Hopefully we can change zoning to be trail friendly. The Outdoor Recreation zoning should not require conditional use for trailheads in my opinion.



December 3

This story will be of interest to Birch Hill Rec Area trail users and any trail users who need or want to cross the Steese Expressway in the Birch Hill area.

www.nscfairbanks.org/2023/12/03/fairbanks-assembly-passes-two-resolutions-that-will-help-skiing/

NORDIC SKI CLUB OF FAIRBANKS

December 21

A note about the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) temperature reading on our mobile weather page <https://www.nscfairbanks.org/mobile-weather/>:

The weather station is on the roof of the Geophysical Institute just above the IARC building, so during inversions the temperature could be considerably cooler several stories down at the West Ridge Ski Hut, which is one of the higher places on the UAF trail system. So, if you use the UAF temperature reading to plan your outings, take that into account.

You can actually see parts of the weather station from the ski hut or if you are on the parking lot in front of IARC looking to the Geophysical Institute; right at the front corner is a pole with a panoramic camera. Images are updated every 20 minutes at the frontpage of <https://akclimate.org/>

DELTA JUNCTION TRAILS ASSOCIATION

December 10

DONATE We are raising money to help Delta Junction Trails Association maintain your local trails. Your contribution will make an impact, whether you donate \$5 or \$500. Every little bit helps. Thank you for your support. <https://www.facebook.com/donate/875136414290385/741662481336888/>

Other ways to donate: Bring it to Mt McKinley Bank and tell them it's for Delta Junction Trails Association. If you do, send us a PM so we know. Or mail a check to PO Box 710. The Delta Junction Community Library is also an easy drop off point for donations.

INTERIOR LINK

- Solstice Light (fatbike trip on White Mountains Nat Rec Area): <http://tinyurl.com/c3xfy7t>

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

HAINES HUTS AND TRAILS

December 26

We're Hiring! As we look back on an exciting year of planning and Tukga-Hut construction, and look forward to a new year that will see more fun adventure events, Tukga Hut completion, and an expanded focus on trail improvement projects, HHAT is excited to announce we've secured funding for a staff position!

The Outdoor Initiative Coordinator position will support Haines Huts and Trails' vision of fostering strategically located public use cabins and trails that connect people to place, encourage land stewardship, and promote sustainable community development. Please help spread the word to anyone anywhere who might be a good fit for this position. See job description below and email admin@haineshuts.org with any questions.

Job Description and application instructions: <http://tinyurl.com/mphsj95x>

More about Haines Huts and Trails: www.haineshuts.org



SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

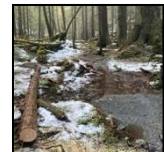
December 27



Holiday break can't stop our incredible team of volunteers! These three and Ben constructed a temporary tread repair on the Forest and Muskeg Trail and cleared a couple other blowdown. Thank you to the volunteers who came out for a morning trail maintenance session!

December 21

What a difference a week makes! Thank you to STW Executive Director Ben Hughey and his family for taking care of this blowdown on the approach to Beaver Lake from Herring Cove. We also love the surprise Christmas tree decorated in the forest, what a nice surprise. Head on out to the Beaver Lake trail this weekend and check it out for yourself!



December 20

Sitka Trail Works: A Year In Review

In 2023 we helped more Sitkans enjoy the outdoors through programming, trail construction and maintenance. These are just a few examples we wanted to celebrate with you.

PLAN This year, Sitka Trail Works finalized the multi-year planning process to compile a vision for the future of our trails. Stay tuned for the final draft of the 2023 Sitka Trail Plan!

BUILD In 2023 we finished the Cross Trail by completing the Phase 6 extension to Starrigavan with a connector to Halibut Point Road. Many of you joined us for the Grand Opening in July!

MAINTAIN We hosted a Trail Master Summit and launched a volunteer program to equip Sitkans with the skills to care for local trails. Our volunteers have hauled and distributed over 30,000 pounds of gravel and moved over 3000 pounds of lumber in addition to addressing drainage and blowdown across Sitka's trails.



PROMOTE We hosted the Lingít Aaní Trail Works Camp and have continued our Youth Programming into the fall with a class at Pacific High, a hiking club with 4H and more! We brought 45 community members to Sea Lion Cove for the first time in years and had many more hikes with you all on and off island.

2023 has brought us together outside with so many of you and we couldn't be more grateful. All of our work wouldn't be possible without the support of the Sitka community. If you'd like to support our work, please contribute to the fundraiser below. Here's to a great 2024 full of more time spent outdoors with our neighbors!

December 15

Thank you to the City of Sitka Public Works team for installing a new culvert near the Kramer Street Cross Trail entrance and spreading and compacting a few fresh yards of gravel where material loss had occurred nearby. This makes a huge impact for people who access the Cross Trail from this area and ensures the trail remains resilient. Thank you!



December 8

It was a great last day in our Friday Life Skills class at Pacific High School. All semester students have collectively completed over 30 hours of trail work, keeping trails accessible and sustainable. To celebrate, today we just hiked and enjoyed the trail. We drove out to Herring Cove and admired the waterfall and everyone's favorite, the "split rock". Can't wait for next semester!

November 30

Our friends at the City and Borough of Sitka have been busy cleaning up blowdown from last week's storm!



They took to the Cross Trail and cleared both of these spots of the fallen trees that blocked the path. We are so grateful for their work keeping the Cross Trail accessible. Thank you!

They are also going to be working on the Cross Trail segment right above Kramer Hill tomorrow to address some drainage issues and reinforce the tread to ensure the trail is sustainable. During this time, this portion of the trail will be closed, due to the large scale of work necessary. Check out the attached PSA to learn more about the closure.

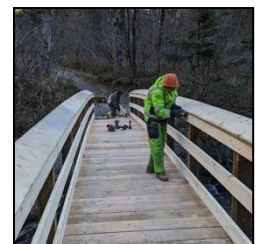
TRAIL MIX, INC.

December 7

💎 New bridge alert! 💎

As the season came to a close, our crew members, with the help of some excellent folks at CBJ Parks & Landscaping, were able to squeeze in one more bridge build! This bridge is located on Perseverance Trail, shortly after the double metal bridge. 🌲

We can't wait to get back on Perseverance Trail at the start of next season to polish up the approaches to this bridge and install one more new bridge! 😊



November 30

Gabion basket or crew member time out? 🤔

A Gabion Basket is essentially a wire mesh cage filled with rocks or other durable materials. 🪨

🔨 Our crew members installed 11 new gabion baskets on Perseverance Trail this summer to help stabilize the section of trail that butts up against Gold Creek. By installing the baskets, we are able to increase the durability and lifetime of the trail. They act as a protective barrier, preventing soil loss while allowing water to pass through, reducing the risk of flooding. 🌊 🚧

To fill up the baskets, crew members quarried rock from the surrounding area. The rock was then transported by our trusty canycoms and then slid down a chute into the baskets. 🌲



November 29

🌲 🧑‍🌾 Attention fans of West Glacier Trail! 🏞️ ⚡



At the beginning of our season our crew worked with our partners at the Forest Service to make improvements to the trailhead of this well-loved trail. Over time, the section of trail that spans from the parking lot to the bridge had sunken and eroded, causing a large puddle to form.

👊 Our crew members worked tirelessly to raise the trail and increase durability. To do so, they scoured the forest to gather large rocks, which formed the base of the raised trail. The larger rocks allow drainage, while increasing durability. 🧡 Then, they topped it all off with a layer of compacted gravel to create a beautiful trail. ❤️ 🛠️

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

December 1

TAKE SURVEY The City and Borough of Juneau Parks & Recreation Department requests your input on the Bonnie Brae Access Trail to Treadwell Ditch planning study. The project team is conducting a follow-up public survey (bit.ly/3T2p4bV), open until January 8, 2024, based on the public comments received in the summer of 2023.

On the project website (www.tinyurl.com/bonniebraetrail), you will find updated timelines, project goals, and survey results, as well as several proposed site designs. The City and Borough of Juneau, the US Forest Service, and Federal Highway Administration - Western Federal Lands Highway Division, are working together with the public to assess trail options and improvements that would enhance access to the Treadwell Ditch Trail and make it safer, as well as more environmentally friendly. This reconstruction plan may include a parking lot, as well as other features to facilitate access from the Bonnie Brae subdivision area to the Treadwell Ditch Trail.



Please take the survey (bit.ly/3T2p4bV) and join the virtual open house to provide your thoughts on the proposed sites for the Bonnie Brae Access Trail.

SOUTHEAST LINK

- Sitka Trail Works 2023 Fall Newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/3x2f8ca9>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Climbing Beautiful Ridge – Sitka (Starling Birch): www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmeucbaM6Go
- Big changes are coming to Juneau’s Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area: <http://tinyurl.com/nhvpwctm>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

‘HIKE THE HILL’ TRAILS ADVOCACY EVENT STARTS IN JANUARY

ADVOCATE American Trails presents the virtual issue briefings of the annual Hike the Hill® advocacy event for 2024, a joint effort of the Partnership for the National Trails System and American Hiking Society.

This event has options for both virtual participation (issue briefings January 22-26) and meeting resources for scheduling your own congressional meetings) and in-person participation in Washington, D.C. (February 11-15) (group meetings and a Trails Celebration Party).

This exciting event will bring together the diverse trails community, with a focus on the National Trails System, to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders including trail funding, public lands management and conservation, equitable access, and other top priority issues that sustain trails and improve access to public lands.

Registration is now open, and a tentative schedule of events is available: <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/hike-the-hill/>.

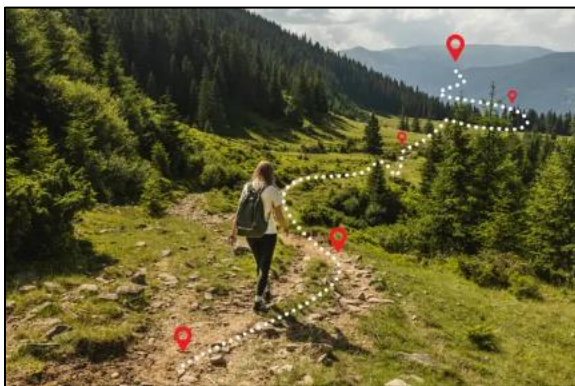
For more information about the event please contact Tyler Ray at tray@americanhiking.org.

From American Trails Facebook post



AMERICAN TRAILS OFFERS FREE SUSTAINABLE TRAILS COURSES

LEARN American Trails is proud to announce the newly launched Foundations of Sustainable Trails, developed and hosted in partnership with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands and the U.S. Forest Service.



These short self-directed courses are perfect for new crew members, volunteers, and students heading into in-person programs in trail planning, design, maintenance, construction, and management. The course curriculum focuses on core trail concepts, emphasizing what it means for a trail to be sustainable. The introductory course describes the lifecycle of sustainable trails, and four self-assessed mini courses cover the basics of trail hydrology, structures, tools, and tread & alignment.

Find out more about the Foundations of Sustainable Trails online training on the American Trails website: <https://tinyurl.com/52bb2833>

From American Trails email

TRAILS CAPACITY GRANT PROGRAM DEADLINE IN JANUARY

APPLY American Trails administers the Trails Capacity Program and invests in building nationwide trails community capacity by funding trail stewardship training, maintenance, research, and education. This grant program targets funding for small local trail projects that engage the community and connect trail assets to a broader spectrum of users. Project applicants may include nonprofit organizations, businesses, or agencies at the state or local level. American Trails is administering this grant program, and is soliciting applications for funding, with awards between \$5K and \$10K per project. **Deadline is January 15, 2024, by 11:59 PM Pacific Time.** Find out more here: <https://www.americantrails.org/the-trails-capacity-program>

From American Trails newsletter

APPLY TO BECOME A NEXTGEN TRAIL LEADER IN 2024

APPLY American Hiking Society invites applications for its seventh class of NextGen Trail Leaders!

NextGen Trail Leaders are rising stars in the outdoor community and the voice of young hikers who take part in a yearlong program of advocacy and stewardship to protect public lands.

AHS is seeking five individuals, aged 18-40, from across the country who are interested in gaining advocacy experience and being a voice of young hikers for advocacy and stewardship.

2024 will be an important year in outdoor advocacy, and AHS is looking to support new voices to lead the way! **Applications to become a NextGen Trail Leader in 2024 are open now through January 3.**

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

From American Hiking Society newsletter

TAKE ACTION FOR TRAIL ACCESS

ADVOCATE Help ensure that EVERYONE has access to enjoy and explore trails and public lands!

Congress is on the cusp of passing a bipartisan outdoor recreation package that would ensure everyone can enjoy the outdoors, improving the recreation experience on trails and public lands and expanding access.

Add your voice to leave the outdoor community better than you found it! Trails and public spaces are in dire need of support — and your voice can help.

<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/advocacy/>

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

- Am. Hiking Society’s 2023 Volunteer Vacations: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacation-trips/>
 - Alternative (to Spring) Break: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/alternative-break/>
- Conservation International VIP newsletter (Dec 2023): <https://tinyurl.com/5c84ct44>

FUNDING

- FOX Factory Trail Trust (**applications reviewed quarterly**): <https://trailtrust.com/>
- Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OHVs, **quarterly deadlines**): <https://yamahaoai.com/>
- Clif Family Foundation grants (for groups; ddlines March 1, August 1): <https://tinyurl.com/5bku286n>

OTHER LINKS:

- Recreation bill aims to foster biking, target shooting on public lands: <https://tinyurl.com/nhp2a79f>
- Three Trails Designated as Units of the National Park System: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8ebbjh>
- Forming & Running State or Regional Trail Coalitions: <http://tinyurl.com/ypp27nzy>
- Trails as Resilient Infrastructure: <http://tinyurl.com/yvct69rd>
- Tribal Development of Trails, Dedicated Pedestrian, Bicycle Infrastructure: <http://tinyurl.com/yxvz6chj>

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