



# NEWSLETTER

JAN  
2023

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

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### GOODBYE AND THANK YOU TO CHRIS BECK, WELCOME SAM DINGES

After many years of both board service and tireless, nearly full-time work as a volunteer, Chris Beck is stepping back from his many duties with Alaska Trails.

Chris has been integral to the Alaska Trails Initiative and the many facets that have come about through that initiative due to his leadership. His work with federal agency partners connected Alaska Trails to the Tongass Sustainable Trails Strategy and the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). His work, with the US Forest Service and Alaska State Parks respectively, resulted in long-term contracts with those entities to put together robust plans that will inspire positive outcomes for many years into the future.

Chris has been the driving force behind the Alaska Long Trail, and we are very grateful for all his efforts to establish a trail connection from Seward to Fairbanks. He has worked with many partners across the state to lay the foundation for a world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain. Chris has always been focused on the benefits that more and better trails bring to Alaska. He has led the effort to show how trails can boost our economy and enhance health in our communities.

We are grateful for all his many efforts and wish him well with his future endeavors!



#### *Welcome to Sam Dinges!*

Alaska Trails is excited to announce the hiring of Sam Dinges as our Long Trail Coordinator for the Mat-Su!



As a fourth generation Alaskan and lifelong resident of the Mat-Su Borough, Sam grew up exploring trails in the Talkeetna and Chugach Mountains. Since 2012, he has worked in nonprofit management and destination marketing for Anchorage and the Mat-Su, most recently as Executive Director at the Palmer Museum and Visitor Center. Outside of work, Sam serves on the board of the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau, and previously served on the board for the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce. He enjoys hiking and skiing with his wife and their four dogs, and is thrilled to be working on helping to build more trails in his backyard.

## STILL TIME TO HELP TRAILS BY JOINING THE RACE ACROSS ALASKA

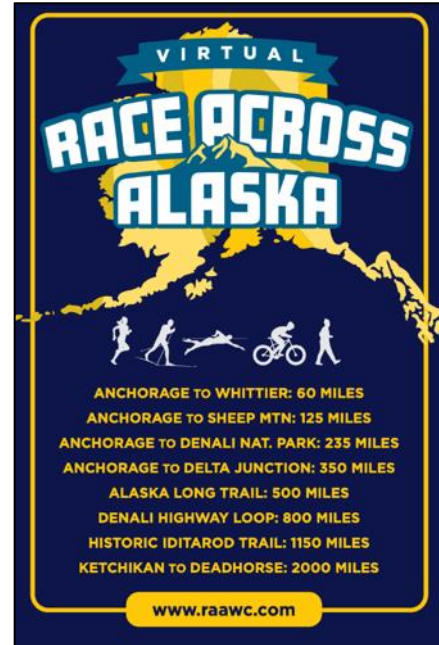
**ENTER/DONATE** The virtual Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge began on December 21, but it's not too late to join in.

RAAWC is a fundraiser for the Alaska Long Trail project. It has raised over \$60,000 for the Long Trail in 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. You can also participate as a team (friends/family/school). **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 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.



## ALASKA TRAILS HIRING FOR SEASONAL TRAIL CREW POSITIONS

**APPLY** Alaska Trails is hiring for several crews planned for seasonal trail work in 2023. Those include three crews that will work in Chugach State Park and the Chugach National Forest (CNF). One of the CNF crews will spend the entire summer in Cordova. All three crews will be backcountry crews that will camp out at their various workplaces. In addition, Alaska Trails plans to hire a camp cook and manager for its project on the South Fork of Eagle River trail. The list of positions available includes: Trail Crew Leaders, Trail Crew Members, and Camp Manager.



Alaska Trails is also hiring for a YEP (Youth Employment in Parks) Field Supervisor for the 2023 season from May to August. Alaska Trails works in conjunction with the Anchorage Park Foundation and the City of Anchorage on the YEP program.

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

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

**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/](http://www.pickclickgive.org/)



To go directly to the Alaska Trails “Pick. Click. Give.” page click here: [www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails](http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails)

## END OF YEAR GIFTS AMOUNT TO \$28,090 FOR ALASKA TRAILS!

Thank you to everyone who gave generously in the month of December! Because of your donations and a \$10,000 matching donation from ConocoPhillips Alaska, we raised more than \$28,000 to help build and maintain trails in Alaska. We had 132 individual donations in December. We are overwhelmed by your generosity and grateful for your contributions to help us build sustainable trails for all. We’d like to thank everyone who donated and our sponsors, ConocoPhillips Alaska and REI. And congratulations to Helen and Gayle Nienhueser for winning the drawing for the REI Co-op Trailbreak 60 Pack!

## TRAIL TALES SUPPORTS ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC WITH TRAIL STORIES

**ATTEND** Alaska Trails announces the first Trail Tales storytelling event of 2023. Our first event of the year will be on **Tuesday, January 24, at 7 p.m.**, in partnership with Alaska Geographic, which provides outdoor educational opportunities for youth in partnership with public land agencies. **The event will be held at the Anchorage Museum.** Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$20. All our shows last year sold out, so don’t wait. For more information and **to purchase tickets, visit:** <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trail-tales>



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 past year we have been happy to share the stage with the Alaska Huts Association, the Chugach Park Fund, Anchorage Park Foundation, and Skiku.

## SEVERAL EASY WAYS TO HELP FUND ALASKA TRAILS

With the help of other organizations, you can help Alaska Trails continue advocating for trails.

**FASHIONPACT:** FashionPACT, an Anchorage resale boutique, seeks to strengthen the Anchorage community by raising funds for local non-profits. You can help by donating gently used clothing, shoes, jewelry, etc. at FashionPACT and choose Alaska Trails. FashionPACT sells the items in their boutique and gives us payment for the things that sell. Learn more at [www.FashionPact.com](http://www.FashionPact.com).



**FRED MEYER REWARDS:** Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Alaska Trails at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards). You can search for Alaska Trails or by our nonprofit number – KU871. Then, every time you shop and use your rewards card, you are helping Alaska Trails earn a donation! You still earn your rewards points, fuel points, and rebates, just as you do today.



**AMAZONSMILE:** If you shop at Amazon, please take the simple extra step of signing up for AmazonSmile.



It's the same Amazon website, but when you shop from AmazonSmile, you can make a donation to Alaska Trails at the same time: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/73-1677483>

**GOODSEARCH:** GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to charities designated by the user. You use it just as you would any search engine, and, it's powered by Yahoo!. Just go to [www.goodsearch.org](http://www.goodsearch.org) and be sure to enter Alaska Trails as the charity you want to support.



**BAGOY'S:** Anchorage-based Bagoy's Florist and Home helps through its Helping Hands web fundraising program (<https://www.bagoys.com/programs/charitable-giving/>). When you order online from Bagoy's ([www.bagoys.com](http://www.bagoys.com)) there is a check box at the bottom of the payment page that says "This is a Helping Hands order." When you check that box, the list of enrolled organizations are shown and you can choose Alaska Trails from the list.



## SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Dec 23: Alaska Trails is very grateful to the Anchorage Mayor's Charity Ball, Inc. and all the folks who came to the event and donated so generously. At a BIG reveal this morning, we learned that Alaska Trails' portion of the proceeds = \$58,019.84!!!

Dec 22: We had such a great time hosting Trail Tales last week with Skiku! Lots of laughter, inspirational stories, and great company on a cold, snowy evening. If you have enjoyed Trail Tales events with us these past few months or would like to see what they're all about, we have added three more events to our schedule in the new year! Check it out, and buy tickets today: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trail-tales>

1/24/23 - Trail Tales with Alaska Geographic

2/21/23 - Trail Tales with Bike Anchorage

3/21/23 - Trail Tales with KMTA



## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### CONGRESSIONAL SPENDING BILL HAS TRAIL SPENDING FOR ALASKA

The \$1.7 trillion omnibus bill recently passed by Congress and signed by President Biden has several items in it that will be of interest to Alaska trail users. Here are items from a list distributed by Sen. Lisa Murkowski's office (see full list here: <https://tinyurl.com/2vzcbxwv>).

- Statewide: \$1 million to complete a National Scenic Trail feasibility study to connect Seward and Fairbanks (aka the Alaska Long Trail).
- Chugach National Forest: \$2.3 million to construct and improve recreational trails and access on the Iditarod National Historic Trail.
- Denali: \$2.2 million for the design and construction of pedestrian pathways along the Parks Highway corridor in the Denali Borough.
- Kodiak: \$1 million to the Island Trails Network for removal, recycling and recovery of debris from the Alaska marine environment.
- North Slope: \$2.5 million for the Northern Route of the North Slope Borough Community Winter Access Trails pilot program, which provides for the creation of temporary winter trail access between communities where year-round connecting roads do not exist.



Also, not on Sen. Murkowski's list but included in an Anchorage Daily News story is "funding to repair the road that heads into Denali National Park and Preserve. A long stretch of the road has been closed due to a slow-moving landslide in the Polychrome Pass area, which has impeded access to parts of the park. A previous round of federal funding allowed construction to begin on a bridge over the area." See story here: [www.adn.com/politics/2022/12/23/whats-in-the-17-trillion-government-spending-bill-for-alaska-lots/](http://www.adn.com/politics/2022/12/23/whats-in-the-17-trillion-government-spending-bill-for-alaska-lots/)

### 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](http://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 are available online.

The 2023 program schedule is now posted on the website (<https://tinyurl.com/3hecn5ny>). **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*

## 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”

<https://protectourwinters.org/>

“Protect Our Winters” is a group of outdoor people organized to “protect the places and lifestyles they love from climate change.” 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.

### *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.

## **SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES**

### **FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS**

Dec 15: The American Hiking Society has a sign-on letter to advocate for increasing funding for trails across federally managed public lands including the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service.

Take this simple step if you want to support more trails funding.

<https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/take-action/>

Dec 14: 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."

One of their tenets is: Tag Lightly

- 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 perfect 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.

Find out more about the group here:

<https://www.responsiblestewardship.org/>

## **STATEWIDE LINKS**

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- Crowd-sourced trail condition reports (with map): <https://www.snowio.com/>
- State of Alaska plans to sue feds over trail corridors across public land: <https://tinyurl.com/ywp4w42m>

### **SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL**

- Man in Alaska Rescued with New iPhone 14 Satellite Feature: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9cmvu2>
- Lifetime Public Lands Pass Available for Veterans, Gold Star Families: <https://tinyurl.com/runux522>
- Dead rabbit saves the day!: <https://thingstolucat.com/2022/12/16/dead-rabbit-saves-the-day/>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### PERMANENT PUBLIC ACCESS TO STEWART TRAIL GETS CLOSER

The update below on Anchorage's Stewart Trail was sent out by the Friends of the Stewart Public Trail on December 22. Also, the radio show/podcast Outdoor Explorer did an episode on the Stewart Trail issues. Check it out here: <https://alaskapublic.org/2022/12/07/outdoor-recreation-access-in-anchorage-vol-1/>

Good news. On December 20 Judge Crosby denied the defendant's motion for reconsideration. The decision is attached. We are very appreciative to our attorneys David Gross and the firm of Birch Horton Bittner Cherot, and Tom Meacham.

The defendants will now have 30 days to respond to our motion for entry of judgment (filed in September, attached), which will be January 19. Following that deadline, we will have an opportunity to reply.

This will set the stage for the judge to issue the final entry of judgement, establishing the terms of the easement, including:

- Terms for the removal of the barricade to provide for non-motorized access.
- Define the location and scope of the easement.
- Be a notice to the public regarding the availability of the trail.
- Preclude current and future landowners from doing anything to prevent the non-motorized public from using the trail, including prohibiting intimidation of trail users.
- Be the vehicle for securing an award of costs and fees.



Also, although the trail is open, the barricade is still up, and we encourage you to hold off using the trail until it is removed. Should you use the trail, be aware that there is a new residence in the vicinity of the trail, and the trail is an active driveway. So be cautious, and respectful in regard to trash, dog waste, noise, and please stay on the trail. Please park where you do not inhibit the flow of traffic, and do not block the gate or other driveways. Thank you very much.

Our Stewardship Committee is now active and examining issues including parking and trail signage.

We will continue to update you as things progress. Thank you for your patience and support in this process.

Happy holidays! We look forward to 2023 when we will be back on the trail.

Sincerely,  
Friends of the Stewart Public Trail,  
[friendsofthestewarttrail@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthestewarttrail@gmail.com)

*Photo: Stewart Trail blockage from the Alaska Landmine (<https://alaskalandmine.com/>)*



## TRAIL NEWS ABOUT MAT GREENBELT, SKEETAWK IN NEWSLETTER

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation has some good news in its recent newsletter. The University of Alaska is seeking a conservation easement on Matanuska Experiment Farm land it previously considered for gravel extraction. And there is a new multi-use trail at Skeetawk in Hatcher Pass.

### EXPERIMENT FARM LAND

**COMMENT** It's been a LONG time since we've been able to give you an update on the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center Resource Assessment Project that began in Fall of 2020, but we've got some big news for you!

See the 2020 MSTPF Board of Director's letter to UAF Board of Regents to learn more about this project: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ym77j>

After ongoing public meetings, outreach, and facilitated meetings with stakeholders, the University of Alaska has announced that they are seeking a conservation easement for 86 acres of the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center that they were previously considering for gravel extraction. This is a big step in preserving public recreation access in the well-loved Matanuska Greenbelt Trail System!

The University of Alaska Land Management Office is seeking public comment on the proposed



disposal plan for a conservation easement for certain land interests within 86 acres of the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center. The University and local stakeholders reviewed development options to generate revenue for the University, while also serving the University's mission and the local community. During this process, the community advocated for the trails and greenspace as an essential asset to the Mat-Su community. As a result of these discussions, community stakeholders identified potential funding to purchase a conservation easement to protect the

recreational value of a portion of the lands and compensate the University for the loss in revenue from not developing that portion of the property for material extraction or subdivisions sales. The University intends to enter into an agreement with the Great Land Trust and the Mat-Su Health Foundation for an 86-acre portion of the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center.

Parties interested in commenting on this proposed disposal plan must **submit written comments to the University through its Land Management office** by fax at (907) 786-7733, by email at [ualand@alaska.edu](mailto:ualand@alaska.edu) or at the address in the Public Notice, **by no later than 5:00 P.M. on Thursday, January 19, 2022**, to be considered.

View the Public Notice here: <https://tinyurl.com/4pftrh3e>

If you love the Matanuska Greenbelt Trails and want to see public recreation access preserved, please comment on the public notice by Thursday, January 19th. Your voice had a big impact on getting the University to the table with stakeholders, but our work isn't done yet. Submit your comment today!

*Photo: Matanuska Experiment Farm Trailhead from Experiment Farm Facebook page*

## SKEETAWK SUMMER TRAILS

Skeetawk Summer Trail Construction began at Skeetawk this past summer thanks to generous grants from the Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation and from the State of Alaska Recreational Trails Program.

Skeetawk received funding to begin their first two trails; the first is "Multi-Use #1" trail, which begins at the parking lot at Skeetawk and will climb up toward the top of the first chairlift, outside the area of current (phase 1a) operation, and be approximately 4,300' long. This trail will be part of a larger network of trails eventually connecting to the 16-mile trail system, and then over to Government Peak Recreation Area. Due to challenging soil conditions and much higher than average rain events this summer, this trail will not be completed until June of 2023. Once finished, this trail will be an intermediate, dual-direction trail available to the public to use for biking, and pedestrian use.



The second trail, the "Meadow Loop" (pictured on the right) is a 2,500' beginner multi-use loop at the top of the chairlift. This is a 5-foot wide, gravel compacted trail with low grades. It will provide scenic views and be accessible to more people.

This trail is completed, and we look forward to sharing this trail with everyone in the year to come!

*Photo: From Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation newsletter*

## ANCHORAGE TRANSPORTATION FAIR TO BE HELD IN JANUARY

The Anchorage Transportation Fair will be held **January 12 from 3 to 7pm** at the Alaska Airlines Center, Auxiliary Gym. Featured projects: Seward Highway/36th Avenue Interchange; Spenard Road Rehabilitation: Minnesota to Benson; Seward - Glenn Mobility Planning & Environmental Linkages Study; 42nd Avenue Upgrade; Providence/University Drive Surface Rehabilitation; Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Engineering; And many more... Snacks available while supplies last. For more information, go to [www.anchorage-transportation-fair.com](http://www.anchorage-transportation-fair.com) or contact Camden Yehle at [camden.yehlealaska@gmail.com](mailto:camden.yehlealaska@gmail.com) or text/call 907-346-0506.

*From What's Up? by Peg Tileston*

## SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

### ALASKA STATE PARKS

Dec 23: Snowmachiners! ☀️ ❄️ Maps and boundaries for the Chugach can be found here: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/chugach/chugachindex.htm>

### ALASKA HUTS ASSOCIATION

December 9: We are incredibly excited to announce that the Rasmuson Foundation has awarded \$350,000 to the Lars Spurkland Memorial Hut. Thank you to the Rasmuson Foundation and all of the donors who have supported the project thus far. We are almost fully funded! Help us get over the finish line by donating here: <https://www.alaskahuts.org/donations/>.



## FRIENDS OF KACHEMAK BAY STATE PARKS IS AT HOMER SAW & CYCLE.

December 10: A Huge Thank you to Homer Saw & Cycle for their ongoing generous support ! They donated the time and parts for winterizing all our power tools! Plus, they are always there to help with repairs and provide best prices on FKBSBP trail clearing tools and supplies. Not to mention their safety instructions & moral support. Bob once successfully talked us through how to repair a brusher over the phone as we sat on Sadie knob in a rain storm. We are so grateful for their quality service and products they provide our community and Friends volunteer crews! Shop local for the holidays & we guarantee you'll find whatever you need at Homer Saw & Cycle!



## MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

December 7: The 2023 Annual Mat-Su Borough Trails Parking Passes are available online [www.matsugov.us](http://www.matsugov.us), at the MSB Admin Building, Talkeetna Library, and at the Jim Creek Park Shop. They are \$40 for 1, or \$70 for a 2 pack.

Annual parking passes are good for the current calendar year (2023). They 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.



## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Thankful for Alaska – A Thanksgiving Road Trip to the Mat-Su: <https://tinyurl.com/bddwn7h2>
- Public Easement authorized for Lake Louise Snow Machine Club: <http://notice.alaska.gov/209157>
- Anchorage Park Foundation's Winter Recreation guide: <https://tinyurl.com/38dp3usy>
- Winter Ice and Trail Status (Anchorage area): <https://tinyurl.com/5n7jrum5>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### PROPOSED ORDINANCE WOULD REMOVE TEETH FROM TRAILS PLAN

**COMMENT** A proposed Fairbanks borough ordinance that would strip an important part of the Fairbanks Comprehensive Trails Plan will have a public hearing in January.

Ordinance No. 2022 - 65, submitted by Assemblymembers Jimi Cash and Tammie Wilson, would take out the requirement from the borough's subdivision code that landowners who are subdividing their property give an easement to certain trails on the borough's trails plan. For the sponsors, at issue is private property rights.

The ordinance will be given a **public hearing** at the borough Assembly's regularly scheduled meeting **on Thursday, January 12**.

Currently, the borough's subdivision code (Title 17) requires that landowners who are subdividing their property give an easement to any Category A and B trails in the borough trails plan passing through that property. Landowners are allowed to work with the borough to realign the trail if necessary. The code also requires that the borough's Platting Board require that dedication.

The proposed ordinance wording is simple. See below (CAPITALIZED words in [brackets] would be removed from the current law and underlined words would be added.)

Section 2. Subsection A of FNSBC 17.56.040, Trail easements, shall be amended as follows:

A. On lands through which Category A and B trails pass, the Platting Board [SHALL] may require the dedication of easements to conform to the adopted comprehensive recreational trail plan if the property owner consents.

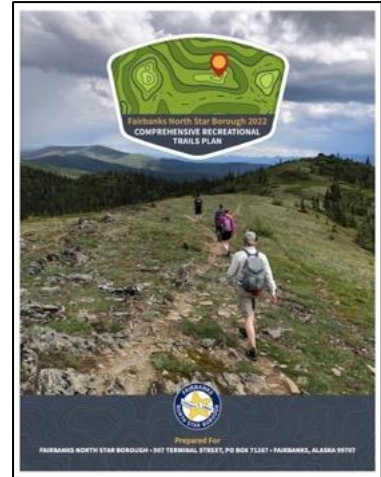
Assemblyman Aaron Lowjeski has also submitted a substitute ordinance that is very similar.

Many trail advocates consider this a big blow to trail access in the long run. While some important trails, such as the Equinox Marathon Trail, have portions that cross private property and currently have no guaranteed public access, many trails in the trails plan cross public land. That land might be later subdivided and sold to private owners. State and federal governments – even the borough government – would be under no obligation to give trail easements to trails even if they are in the borough trails plan. Advocates argue that any trails included in the plan must go through an extensive public process that allows several opportunities for affected private landowners to object to the inclusion of the trails.

The effects of the proposed ordinance may not be felt right away, but over the long run access to many wide-ranging trails could potentially be cut off as portions of those trails are closed by new landowners. To find out more see this blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/4nkj3e6n>

People interested in commenting on the ordinance can **give public testimony at the Jan. 12 meeting**, either virtually or in person. People can also let the assembly know by **calling assembly members or sending an email**. To find out more about attending, including how to attend by Zoom see this webpage: <https://fnsb.gov/415/Stay-Connected-with-the-Assembly>. To call or send an email see: <https://fnsb.gov/Directory.aspx?DID=64>

The trails plan update, which has been in the works for several years, is still scheduled to be considered by the assembly in February. The assembly voted in November to postpone action on it due to concerns by newly elected assembly members after the October borough elections. To find out more about that postponement see this blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/496k8rzh>



## FAIRBANKS PARKS AND REC AGAIN HOLDING TRAILS CHALLENGE

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. However, not all the 20 signs had been installed as of December 20 due to the recent cold snap and a sign shortage.

As of this writing, the sign list is only on the Facebook Event, however, it should be on the Trails Office page soon. Also, there is not yet a guide or a registration page up yet. Participants need to be registered to be eligible for prizes and awards. There's a lot going on at the Trails Office with the adoption by the FNSB Assembly of the FNSB Comprehensive Trails Plan still up in the air, so please be patient.

- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/814319782989022/>
- Trails Office page: <https://fairbanksak.myrec.com/info/facilities/details.aspx?FacilityID=14955>

*Photp from the Trails Challenge Facebook Event*

## FREE CLINIC HELD ON DEALING WITH PETS AND TRAPS

A free clinic on how to deal with pets and traps will be held this January in Fairbanks.

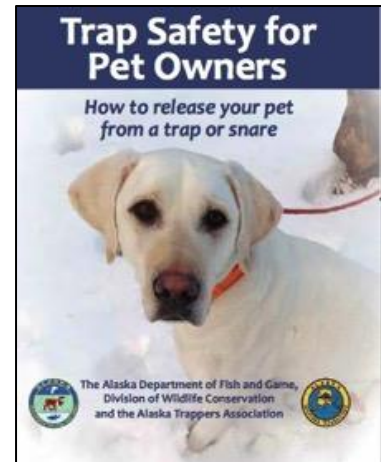
The “Sharing Alaska Trails” workshop will be held at the Alaska Dog Musers Hall, 925 Farmers Loop Road, on **January 18, starting at 6pm**. The workshop is sponsored by the Alaska Trappers Association in association with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

At the workshop you will learn:

- How to recognize if you are on a trapline trail
- How to recognize the various types of traps and snares
- And how to operate the traps and snares in order to free pets.

For more information contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at 907-459-7206. You can see a Facebook Event for the workshop here:

<https://business.facebook.com/events/1241766216686094/>



## SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

### FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

REI Fairbanks will be holding a free Avalanche Awareness workshop on **January 11 starting at 5:45pm**.

Find out more details here: <https://www.rei.com/events/43592/avalanche-awareness>

### FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

Dec 15: ★ North Pole Update ★

The Beaver Springs/5th Ave Park non-motorized Trail is now groomed and open for business!



Thanks to the partnership with the City of North Pole, FNSB Parks & Rec, and other community supporters, this 1.5 mile trail is a great option for beginning skiers, walkers, bike riders and any other non-motorized users! Situated between City Hall, North Pole Elementary School, Santa Claus House, and 5th Avenue Park, this non-motorized trail is a convenient option for those who don't want to drive out of town to enjoy some time in the woods. Parking is available at the trail head (in the North Pole City Hall Parking lot) or at 5th Ave Park.

Dec 5: Good news! ☁️ We got a TON of snow over the weekend and it was enough for Tanana Lakes to groom their ski trails!! 🎿 Get outside, have fun and stay safe (and warm!) while recreating, Fairbanks! 🏂

### ALASKA STATE PARKS

Dec 24: ❄️ 🧊 UPDATE from the Northern Region: Thanks to the recent cold temps, the Chena River crossing on the South Fork Winter trail is in good shape. 👍 🙌

The South Fork winter trail starts at MP 31.4 Chena Hot Springs road and accesses both the Nugget Creek and Mastodon Cabins. 😊

Book the Mastodon Cabin here: <https://tinyurl.com/mxbk992p>

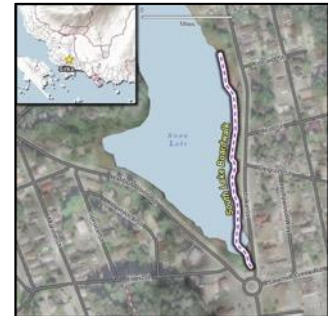
## **SITKA TRAIL WORKS SEEKS FEEDBACK ON TRAIL PROPOSALS**

**TAKE SURVEY** On behalf of Sitka Trail Works and the Sitka Trail Plan Committee, we are releasing a draft list of conceptual plans for improvements to our trail system, and we want to hear what you think.



This spring, over 800 Sitkans responded to a call for public comment and shared their general ideas for the future of our trail system. We learned that Sitkans want more challenging day hikes, easy loop trails, multi-day backpacking trails, and neighborhood connectors.

We spent the summer investigating specific projects that could meet the desires we heard from the community, from renovations of beloved existing trails to development of new routes. This initial list open for comment includes conceptual plans for nine reconstructions, six new day hikes, four backpacking trail ideas, and nine short in-town trail connections.



For example, do you wish you could take in the mountain views from Swan Lake more than just a few days a year when it's frozen? What if we built a boardwalk around the edge of the lake and had a Seawalk type experience in the middle of town? Rank this trail concept and over two dozen other proposals on our survey!

For more information and a link to a survey see: <https://sitkatrailworks.org/sitka-trail-works-seeks-feedback-on-trail-proposals/>

*From Sitka Trail Works website and Facebook page*

## **JUNEAU'S TRAIL MIX LOOKS FORWARD AND REFLECTS**

In the following message, Ryan O'Shaughnessy, executive director of Juneau's Trail Mix, gives an update on what's in store for 2023 and looks back on how much Trail Mix's volunteer group has grown. To find out more about the group check out their website (<https://trailmixinc.org/>) or their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/trailmixinc/>).

We're back to bridge-building on Treadwell Ditch in 2023! With the planning, permitting, and designs completed, we're ready to begin work from Bonnie Brae all the way to Eaglecrest. That will include 5 new bridges including our largest yet, spanning over 50 feet!

Just like prior Treadwell bridges, we have an incredible partner for these installations: the Volunteer Trail Maintenance Team (VTMT) led by Dave Haas, Jack Kreinheder, and Marc Scholten.

Between our trail crew and the VTMT, we have both the skills and people power to pull this off. Now we just need your support.

Community partnerships are what fuel all of Trail Mix's work. Will you join us as a partner and fund next year's bridge construction on Treadwell Ditch?



Founded in 2017, the VTMT has grown to more than 30 volunteers who range in age from their late 40s to mid 70s. Together, they put in an astonishing 2,259 hours this year improving our trail system.

On Treadwell Ditch, their specialty is building bridge approaches, ensuring a smooth transition from each bridge to the adjacent trail, like at Nielsen Creek and Eagle Creek bridges. This summer, they will also begin the new, gentler Mt. Jumbo access trail that will connect Savikko Park to Treadwell Ditch, making that end of the Ditch more accessible.

Not everyone can be in the field swinging a Pulaski like the VTMT, but if you're inspired by their dedication, will you support this partnership by donating today?

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that Dave Haas, one of Treadwell Ditch's biggest proponents, is stepping down from the Trail Mix board after 133 years of service. Don't worry, he isn't really leaving — we're lucky that Dave will still be involved through the VTMT. I'm so grateful for all the ways he has made the Juneau Trail System a better place for our community.

As we close out 2022, I also want to thank all of you. None of the work we do would be possible without your support. From kind words to our crew members to volunteering your time, thank you for all the ways you show you care.

*Photo: From Trail Mix newsletter*

## SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

### SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

Dec 14: Sitka Trail Works recently sat on a panel for the U.S. Forest Service - Tongass National Forest



Leadership Team with other Sitka-based partners including Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Conservation Society, Sitka Economic Development Association, and Sitka Sound Science Center to discuss challenges, successes, and goals for the future of collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service. The Tongass Leadership Team hosted the panel as part of their team-wide retreat in Sitka during the first week of December.

Since the Tongass National Forest is Sitka's backyard, Sitka Trail Works partners closely with the US Forest Service to build trails that cross city and federal land, ensuring that Sitkans have uninterrupted access from their back doors to public lands.

Dec 7: **We're hiring!** Help us design and lead a summer youth program with Sitka Tribe of Alaska! The position is available as a part-time role or as almost full-time including duties at Salty Spoke Bike Coop.

More details on our website! Let us know if you're interested and we can tell you more!

<https://sitkatrailworks.org/join-sitka-trail-works-as-our-youth-program-director/>

### TRAIL MIX, INC.

Dec 30: 5 New Bridges coming to Treadwell Ditch in 2023! 🏗️

With the planning, permitting, and designs completed, we're ready to begin work from Bonnie Brae all the way to Eaglecrest. 🏞️ 2023 means the construction of our largest bridge yet, spanning over 50 feet! 🏆

We have an incredible partner for these installations: the Volunteer Trail Maintenance Team (VTMT). Between our trail crew and the VTMT, we have both the skills and people power to pull this off. 🧡



Community partnerships are what fuel all of Trail Mix's work. 🛞 Will you join us as a partner and fund next year's bridge construction on Treadwell Ditch?

Head to [bit.ly/powerofpartnerships22](https://bit.ly/powerofpartnerships22) to donate!

Dec 15: In 2023, our work will rely on the ✨ power of partnerships ✨ more than ever.



That includes supporting the Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance's plan to build the Under Thunder Bike Park, a reimagining of existing trails into Juneau's new riding hub for kids and beginners.

Will you help fund this new bike park and other projects that prove working together is how to improve our trail system? [bit.ly/powerofpartnerships22](https://bit.ly/powerofpartnerships22)

Dec 5: We ❤️ dirt so much that we named our newsletter after it. Did you know that Trail Mix sends out a monthly newsletter?

Each month, subscribers receive "The Dirt" on Trail Mix. We highlight what we're working on, upcoming trail events, and insider trail information! 🌲 Head to <https://bit.ly/thedirtfromtrailmix> to subscribe!



## SOUTHEAST LINKS

### SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Advice to Juneau's Mendenhall Lake visitors: Ice is never 100% safe: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9dbuv6>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

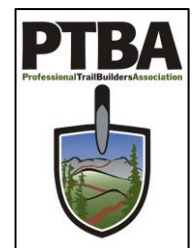
### AMERICAN TRAILS 2021-22 IMPACT REPORT AVAILABLE

American Trails is continuing a period of pivotal growth and improvement. The purpose of this newly developed Impact Report is to provide trail users, managers, and supporters with information on how much American Trails has grown and improved its service for all trail users and organizations. See the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdd2u9wa>

### 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>

## NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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### WEBINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- For a listing of upcoming trail webinars workshops, conferences, and other meetings, see the American Trails calendar at: [www.americantrails.org/training/calendar](http://www.americantrails.org/training/calendar)

### TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": [www.americantrails.org/newsletter](http://www.americantrails.org/newsletter)

### VOLUNTEER

- Conservation Volunteers International Program newsletter (Dec): <https://tinyurl.com/5n7jyzef>
- Am. Hiking Society's 2023 Volunteer Vacations: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacation-trips/>

### 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 (**ddline Jan 23**): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. grants (ATV trail projects; **due March 1**): <https://tinyurl.com/y49dxbhe>
- Clif Bar Family Foundation grants (for groups, projects; **ddline Feb 1**): <http://tinyurl.com/y5es3wjc>

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- 2023 Emerging Trail Leaders (ETL) Scholarship Winners: <https://www.americantrails.org/etl>
- New Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Data Shows Strong Demand for Places to Walk, Bike and Be Active Outside: <https://tinyurl.com/3ya89r8s>

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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](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com)