

Project Title: Preliminary Design/Feasibility Study--Arctic Valley Trailhead Parking Expansion, Chugach State Park

TPS Number: 67994

Priority: 1

Agency: Natural Resources

FY2025 State Funding Request: \$175,000

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

This project funds study and design work to modernize and expand the Arctic Valley Trailhead in Chugach State Park. It will determine suitable expansion areas, access road improvements, circulation patterns, and additional trailhead facilities.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$175,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2025 State Funding Request:	(\$175,000)
Project Deficit:	\$0

Explanation of Other Funds:

N/A

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

This project is a preliminary design & feasibility study for upgrading the Arctic Valley Trailhead in Chugach State Park. The current trailhead has a poor and eroding access road, poor drainage, is unpaved, and does not have a convenient, modern vault latrine or accessible ADA trail. The existing trailhead was built by the Anchorage Ski Club in the 1950s and 60s, and does not conform to any modern Alaska State Parks standards for trailheads, parking lots, drainage, latrines, etc. As part of the Anchorage Ski Club's concession contract with Alaska State Parks, the trailhead, road, and parking lots were transferred to Alaska State Parks' ownership.

Because Arctic Valley is not in a residential neighborhood, it is a rare access point to Chugach State Park that can be improved and expanded without creating conflicts with its neighbors. As such, it provides an opportunity to take pressure off the Glen Alps and South Fork Eagle River trailheads.

During peak seasons in the winter and fall the current parking lots are full, with vehicles parked down the side of the access road, creating hazards and impeding traffic flow. The completion of the Marston Extension Trail to Hunter Pass in summer 2022 has significantly increased usage of the area, resulting in the need for additional and upgraded parking and facilities. Arctic Valley is also a part of the Alaska Long Trail with a branch planned from Indian. That route will utilize some of the existing Arctic to Indian winter route, and a summer trail that is envisioned in the Chugach State Park Trails Master Plan. The study would evaluate neighboring areas for potential parking lot expansion, and explore alternative traffic pattern arrangements that would decrease vehicle conflicts on the steep access road.

An ADA-accessible trail from the trailhead to the Marston Overlook, with sweeping views of Anchorage and the Ship Creek Valley, would provide an easy walk, with negligible elevation change, to a great viewpoint, and further facilitate increased visits and recreational opportunities for young children, older adults, and visitors with disabilities.

The current latrines are located near the end of the tertiary parking lot, and are of an older design that is more difficult to maintain and clean than newer models. Newer latrines located near the trailhead would result in increased usage of the appropriate facilities, and would be less susceptible to vandalism.

The Anchorage Ski Club, Inc. which operates the area under a concession contract with Alaska State Parks, has recently completed a

master plan which provides a broad overview of future development at Arctic Valley. The master plan does not include detailed planning for specific projects, so pieces such as trailhead improvements and upgrades require further study before implementation.

Project Timeline:

The design & feasibility study would be completed by end of year 2025.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Anchorage Ski Club, Inc. (concessionaire)

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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This project has been through a public review process at the local level and it is a community priority.