

Alaska Long Trail and Outdoor Recreation Fact Sheet

Prepared by: Alaska Trails | January 10, 2024

www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-long-trail | 907-334-8049 | office@alaska-trails.org

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



Outdoor Recreation in Alaska

The Alaska Long Trail (AKLT) project is set against the backdrop of the robust Outdoor Recreation economy. In 2022, the Outdoor Recreation industry in Alaska generated **\$2.6 billion** in economic output, supported more than **20,000 jobs** and accounted for **4 percent** of the state's economy.

- Growth in Alaska's outdoor recreation economy between 2021 and 2022 was second fastest in the U.S. (after Hawaii) and outpaced the rate of growth of both the state and national economies.
- Total visits to some Alaska State Parks increased 50% from 2019 to 2022.
- Hiking is the fastest growing activity for both air and cruise visitors to Alaska.
- Visitors would spend an *additional* \$250 million in Alaska if they stayed "One More Day".
- Three million visitors a year hike a portion of the Appalachian Trail - a huge potential market for Alaska.

Alaska Long Trail: Benefits for Alaska

- *Economic Development:* Long trail gateway towns benefit from more jobs, business opportunities, and tax revenues. Existing examples of small towns in Alaska benefitting from their proximity to outdoor recreation include Girdwood and the greater Denali area. The AKLT will benefit small communities like Moose Pass, Trapper Creek and Nenana.
- *Access to Public Lands:* "On/off-ramps" to the Alaska Long Trail will help Alaska residents access public lands. Existing access opportunities are insufficient to satisfy growing demand.
- *Reducing the Backlog of Maintenance:* DPOR has a large and growing backlog of maintenance. Funding for Alaska Long Trail projects have focused on improving existing trails first - reducing this backlog, followed by filling small gaps before taking on large construction projects.



Select List of Supporters

- Alaska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects
- Alaska Huts Association
- Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Anchorage Assembly
- Anchorage Park Foundation
- City of Palmer
- City of Seward
- Denali Borough Assembly
- Explore Fairbanks
- Fairbanks Cycle Club
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
- Girdwood Board of Supervisors
- Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce
- Interior Trails Preservation Coalition
- Interior Trails Quarterly
- Kenai Mountains – Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area (KMTA)
- Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District
- Mat-Su Borough Assembly
- Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Mat-Su Health Foundation
- National Park Service
- Nordic Ski Club Fairbanks
- Single Track Advocates, Anchorage
- Skeetawk, Hatcher Alpine Xperience
- Roadmap to a Vital and Safe Anchorage

Alaska Long Trail: Funded Projects

- *State Funded Projects:* Alaska Long Trail projects have received over \$5.6M in funding the past two years through the state capital budget
- *Federally Funded Projects:* Since 2021, projects in Chugach National Forest and Denali Borough have received over \$11.3M in federal appropriations with Senator Murkowski's help since 2021.
- *Other Funding:* ConocoPhillips Alaska, Rasmuson Foundation, Anchorage Park Foundation, Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge and individual donors have all contributed to overall project management.



Alaska Long Trail Overview (concept)

Long Trail Corridor*

-  Existing Trails
-  Identified Gaps

Land Ownership**

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Private |  State |
|  AK Native |  Federal |
|  BLM |  DoD |

*Corridor shown is simplified and may not reflect the alignment.
Existing: existing AKLT alignment and recommended trails.
Identified gaps: concepts, gap, interim, and proposed projects.

**Land ownership parcels within 25 miles of the AKLT corridor
State: parks, preserves, recreation, and special management
Federal: parks, preserves, and forests

Credits: Alaska Trails, AKDOT, BLM, Esri, and AKLT Coalition

