

Project Title: Chugach Mountain Bike Riders - Connect Gruening Middle School to Chugach State Park - Lower Eagle River Trail

TPS Number: 68868

Priority: 1

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Grants to Named Recipient (AS 37.05.316)

Federal Tax ID: 81-428694

Grant Recipient: Chugach Mountain Bike Riders

FY2026 State Funding Request: \$169,916

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Construct switchbacks connecting Gruening Middle School to Chugach State Park and the Lower Eagle River Trail for youth and community park access.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$169,916
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2026 State Funding Request:	(\$169,916)
Project Deficit:	\$0

Explanation of Other Funds:

Chugach Mountain Bike Riders, 501(c)3 has already funded and completed trail assessment by Interior Trails and construction cost estimates by Happy Trails, both Alaska members of the Professional Trail Builders Association.

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

This project will construct approximately one mile of new switchbacks and connecting trail from Gruening Middle School, located on the ridge above the river, to the existing Lower Eagle River Trail at the valley bottom.

Gruening Middle School borders Chugach State Park overlooking the Eagle River Valley. Currently there is no public access to this swath of public land. Access to the park is blocked by a chain link fence due to a steep ravine leading down to the river. Design work has been completed to construct a series of switchbacks that would connect the middle school and surrounding neighborhoods to a network of trails along the river itself.

This trail would be nonmotorized multiuse, as called for in the Chugach State Park Trails Plan, open to hikers, bikers, skiers, etc. It has the support of the Chugach State Park Citizen's Advisory Board, as well as Eagle River and Eagle River Valley Community Councils.

The Lower Eagle River Trail forms the backbone of the Eagle River Greenbelt trail system, parallels the Historic Iditarod Trail and is identified as a possible braid of the Alaska Long Trail. This access trail will provide a connection from the Glenn Hwy Pathway to Gruening Middle School and access upriver neighborhoods and trails.

Chugach Mountain Bike Riders, 501(c)3, has been building and advocating for multiuse trails and pathways in Chugiak-Eagle River since 2017, and currently grooms and maintains the Lower Eagle River Trail in Chugach State Park.

Project Timeline:

Permitting Summer/Fall 2026 and construction Summer/Fall 2027. However, anticipating contractor delays and staffing challenges, all funds will be spent within 5 years.

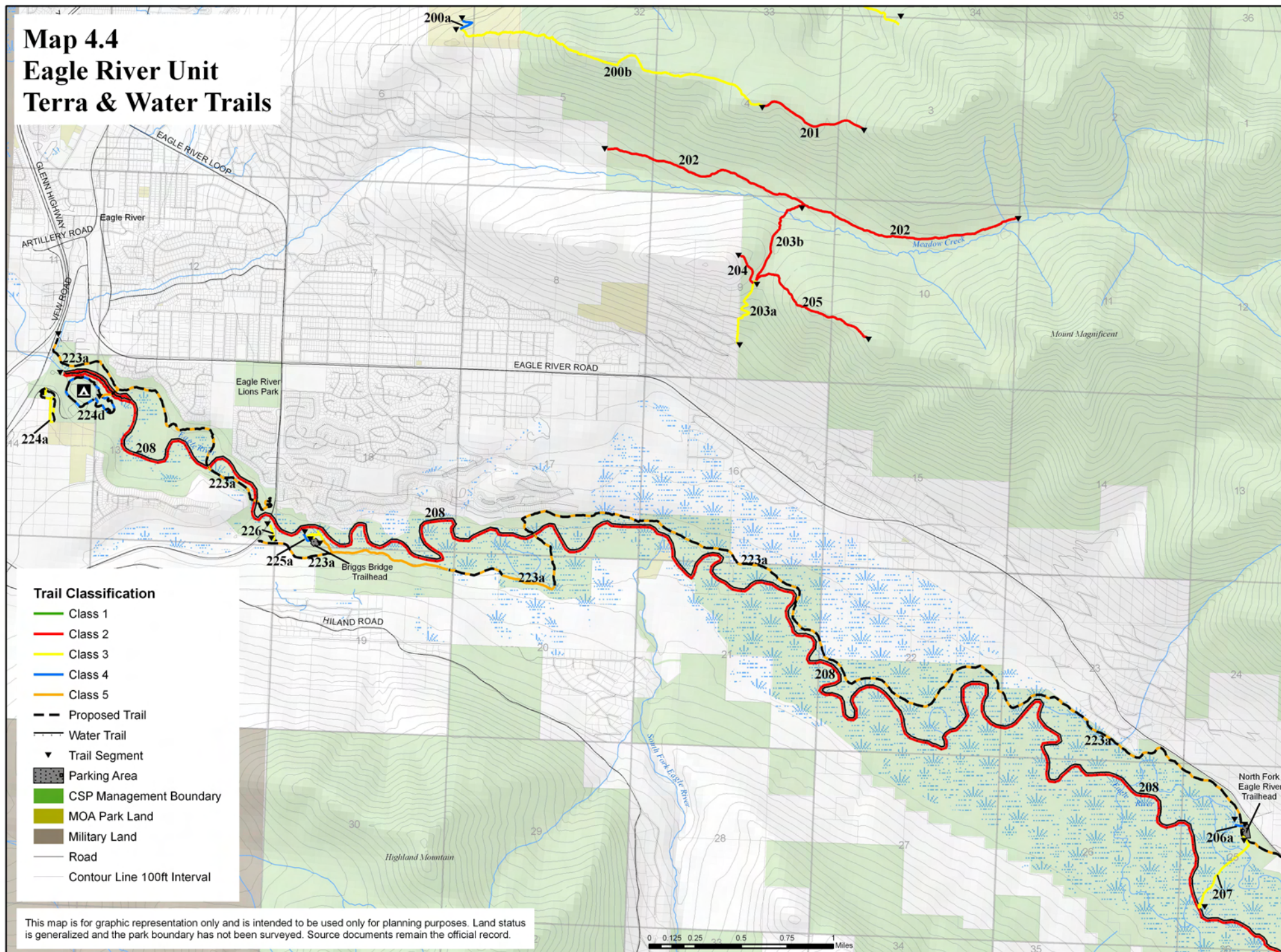
Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name:	William Taygan
Address:	PO Box 672555 Chugiak, AK 99567
Phone Number:	(907)306-4733
Email:	will@ChugachMTB.org

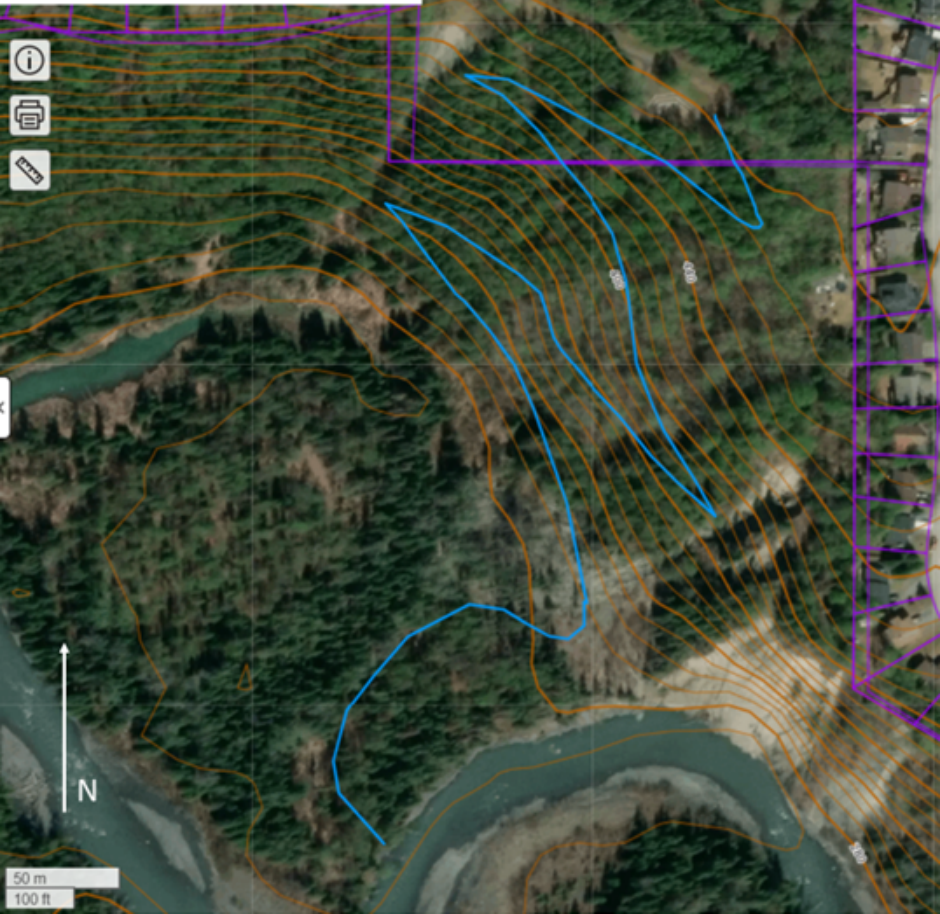
This project has been through a public review process at the local level and it is a community priority.

Map 4.4 Eagle River Unit Terra & Water Trails



This map is for graphic representation only and is intended to be used only for planning purposes. Land status is generalized and the park boundary has not been surveyed. Source documents remain the official record.

Gruening Switchbacks Trail





CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

18620 Seward Hwy, Anchorage, AK 99516 Phone: 907-345-5014 Fax: 907-345-6982

June 12, 2023

To Chugach Mountain Bike Riders:

The Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board (CSP CAB) is writing in support of the initial phase of proposed modification of the Lower Eagle River Trail connecting Access Point ER35 to the Meadow Creek Loop.

This section of trail is part of the Eagle River Greenbelt Pathway which is a proposed class 5 trail connecting the Eagle River Nature Center to the Glenn Highway (see Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan Ch 4 223a). Chugach Mountain Bike Riders has proposed:

- Building a class 3/4 trail as a phased approach to the ultimate class 5, representing a minor revision from the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan (TMP). We believe the intent and long-term phased upgrade approach are consistent with the TMP and the Chugach State Park Management Plan. It will also be a more sustainable option and represent an improvement over the existing fall line trail.
- Building a trail connecting Access Point ER35 to Meadow Creek Loop represents a minor diversion from the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan, however the intent is consistent with the TMP and Access Management Plan

Support from the CAB for further planning and design of this trail would be contingent upon proven community support and engagement of stakeholders to include those at access points. Also, draft documentation through a Trail Project Plan to include parking plan will be essential. Continued communication with the CSP Superintendent and CAB on these matters will ensure a successful long term trail improvement project.

Respectfully,

Trond B Jensen

Trond Jensen
Board Chair
Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board

Officers (*Term Expires EOY*)
Pres. – Chuck Homan, II (2025)
V. Pres. – Cliff Cook (2024)
Sec. – Camilla Hussein-Scott (2024)
Treas. – Sean Murphy (2025)



Directors (*Term Expires EOY*)
Dir. Pauline Tise (2025)
Vacant (2024)
Dir. John Rathert (2025)

EAGLE RIVER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

12001 Business Blvd. #170
Eagle River, Alaska 99577

RE: Letter of Support for the Eagle River Greenbelt Trail – Meadow Creek to Gruening Middle School.

To whom this may concern,

On April 13th, 2023, at the regularly scheduled public meeting, the Eagle River Community Council and attending community members voted unanimously to support a proposal presented by the Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR) to improve and realign a section of the existing Meadow Creek Loop Trail in the Eagle River Greenbelt. The proposed improvement will provide a soft-surfaced, non-motorized, multi-use trail extending from an access point off VFW Road near the Glenn Highway Bridge to Gruening Middle School. The Council supports the upgrade of existing trails in a natural area close to downtown, the Middle School, and local neighborhoods.

CMBR's proposal will ultimately help preserve park resources by creating multiuse trails built to sustainable standards, reducing erosion, and improving site distance to reduce the hazards of wildlife encounters.

Approved by the Eagle River Community Council on this day, April 13, 2023

Chuck Homan II, Vice President

Eagle River Valley Community Council
Federation of Community Councils
1057 W Fireweed Ln, Anchorage, AK 99503

April 14, 2023

Ben Corwin

Superintendent Chugach State Park

Re: Letter of Support for Eagle River Greenbelt Trail – Meadow Creek to Gruening Middle School

Dear Mr. Corwin:

On April 12, 2023, at the regularly scheduled public meeting of the Eagle River Valley Community Council, community members voted unanimously to support a proposal presented by Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR) to improve and realign a section of the existing Meadow Creek Loop Trail in the Eagle River Greenbelt. The proposed improvement will provide a soft surfaced, non-motorized, multiuse trail that would extend from an access point off VFW Road near the Glenn Highway bridge to Gruening Middle School. The Council supports the upgrade of existing trails in a natural area close to downtown, the Middle School, and local neighborhoods.

CMBR's proposal will ultimately help preserve park resources by creating multiuse trails built to sustainable standards, reducing erosion, and improving site distance to reduce the hazardous of wildlife encounters.

Sincerely,



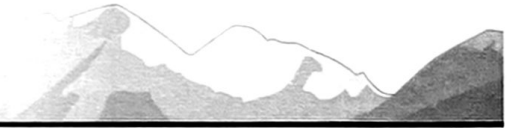
Julie Jessen
President,
Eagle River Valley Community Council



Joy Webb
Secretary,
Eagle River Valley Community Council

Gruening Middle School

9601 Lee Street
Eagle River, AK 99577-8399



Phone 907-742-3600
Fax 907-742-3666

March 10, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to offer my support for the Chugiak Mountain Bike Riders' tentative proposal for the expansion of the trails near Gruening. I would be supportive of developing the existing trail system into a mountain bike trail system. I see this as an overall benefit to the Eagle River community.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Jeffs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bobby Jeffs
Principal
Gruening Middle School