

ALASKA LONG TRAIL - FUNDED PROJECTS FY2023

Over the last two years, Alaska Trails, working closely with partners, identified 15 high-priority shovel-ready and planning-ready projects along the length of the Alaska Long Trail proposed route. The bipartisan state legislature passed its FY2023 budget to include all [15 Alaska Long Trail projects](#) we advocated for. However, Governor Dunleavy subsequently only kept 7 of these projects in the final FY2023 state budget. While the Governor vetoed the other 8 projects, we see this outcome as a glass half-full. This clearly demonstrates that trails are for everyone, a good investment, and something we can all agree on. And the **Alaska Long Trail received \$4.22M in funding for trails!**

These approved 7 projects are all in the Anchorage area, and funding was directed to Chugach State Park, Anchorage Park Foundation and Girdwood Parks and Recreation. Detailed descriptions of the projects follow.

TPS # ¹	Project	Use	Amount	Responsible	Location
66550	Alaska Long Trail Anchorage to Mat-Su Reconnaissance Study	non-motorized	\$300,000	Anchorage Park Foundation	Anchorage - Eagle River - Chugach State Park - Mat-Su Borough
66548	Alaska Long Trail Urban Braid - Anchorage Moose Loop	non-motorized	\$800,000	Anchorage Park Foundation	Anchorage
66793	Peters Creek Upper Trail & Bridge	non-motorized	\$30,000	AK DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation	Anchorage (Eagle River/Chugach State Park)
66797	Arctic to Indian Phase 1 Trail improvements	non-motorized	\$20,000	AK DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation	Anchorage (Eagle River/Chugach State Park)
66761	Turnagain Arm Trail Maintenance and Extension	non-motorized	\$370,000	AK DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation	Anchorage (South Anchorage)
66792	Crow Pass - Eagle River	non-motorized	\$1,500,000	AK DNR DPOR and volunteers/nonprofits	Anchorage (Eagle River/Chugach State Park)
66766	Glacier Creek Bridge - replacement for hand tram	non-motorized	\$1,200,000	Muni of Anchorage, USFS	Anchorage (Areawide)

TOTAL: \$4,220,000

¹ TPS# is the project identifier in the state capital budget system (CAPSIS).

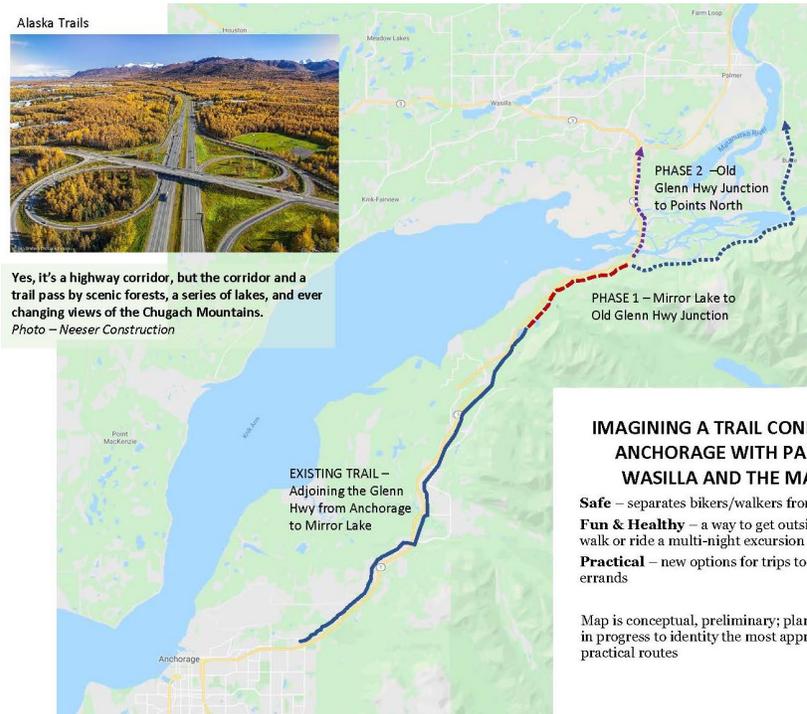
Alaska Long Trail Anchorage to Mat-Su Reconnaissance Study

TPS# 66550

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: Anchorage and Mat-Su Borough

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will conduct reconnaissance studies with AK Department of Transportation and Chugach State Park to Connect Anchorage to the Alaska Long Trail. There is currently no safe, enjoyable way for walkers and bikers to travel between Anchorage and the Mat Su Borough. Providing trail connections between these areas -- Alaska's two largest population centers -- would bring real benefits to residents and visitors in both locations as well as providing a key segment of the Alaska Long Trail, the proposed 500-mile trail connecting Seward and Fairbanks. This project will take the first step in making these connections, by bringing together landowners and stakeholders to investigate the benefits, costs and feasibility of different trail options. A leading candidate route would parallel the Glenn Highway, filling the 8-mile gap from where existing paved bike trail ends at Mirror Lake to northern boundary of the Municipality of Anchorage. The trail that ends at Mirror Lake is an extension of the Ship Creek Trail, which starts in Anchorage's downtown, passes through the Mountain View neighborhood, and then continues north along the Glenn Hwy through Eagle River. Because the Long Trail is planned to be a braided trail system, including hiking, biking and motorized segments, there may be alternative or additional other trail routes that could meet these trail connection goals. These options will also be investigated through this project, working with willing landowners and stakeholders.



BENEFITS AND NEEDS

This is a regional need and a recreation and tourism amenity that is embraced by the communities along the Alaska Long Trail. This critical reconnaissance study must be performed to DOT/PF standards to identify permits needed, a preferred route plan, and a clearer cost estimate for construction. The connection project is part of the Areawide Trails plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and follows portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

This trail project would also benefit two schools in the Anchorage School District. Chugiak Elementary School and Mirror Lake Middle School are the two schools that cannot participate in Bike to School Day (Alaska ranks sixth in the nation for the total number of participating schools per state). In addition to improving the connections between these north Anchorage communities, this trail could provide new ways to reach into Chugach State Park.

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS:

Parties to involve in this process include, but are not limited to, Alaska Department of Transportation, Chugach State Park, Alaska Railroad, Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge managers, Eklutna, Inc., Native Village of Eklutna, Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Mat-Su Parks and Recreation, the Matanuska Susitna Borough, and trail advocates like the Mat Su Trails and Anchorage Park Foundation. All have indicated a willingness to come together with engineers to map a path forward for this narrow gap connecting Alaska's two most populated areas, Anchorage and the Matanuska Susitna Valley. Working with communities and stakeholders in the area will be a very important part of this project. The Native Village of Eklutna is located within the boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage but is not connected to Anchorage trails nor north to the Mat-Su. Neighborhoods in Chugiak are also not connected.

ESTIMATED COST: \$300,000

Alaska Long Trail Urban Braid - Anchorage Moose Loop

TPS# 66548

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: Anchorage

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

One important urban braid of the Alaska Long Trail will pass through the Anchorage Bowl, taking advantage of the Anchorage "Moose Loop". Two segments of the Moose Loop -- the Coastal Trail on the south and west, and Ship Creek Trail on the north -- are planned as designated elements of the braided Long Trail system. These connections help make downtown Anchorage a Long Trail starting and stopping point. Other portions of the 33-mile Moose Loop provide key Long Trail "onramps", improving access for neighborhoods and visitors throughout the Anchorage Bowl. Funding through this project will provide for safer and more enjoyable connectivity within Anchorage and to communities to the north and south, to benefit residents, visitors and businesses. Anchorage's "destination trail" for residents and visitors is the 33-mile-long MOOSE LOOP - the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Campbell Creek Trail, Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek trail, and Ship Creek trail. The Coastal Trail (10 miles), starts downtown along Cook Inlet, heading west and south, with "Moose Ears" at mile 5 and its nose at mile 10. The hump of the Moose heads east from downtown along the Ship Creek Trail (2.5 miles) (which connects to an unfinished trail to Eagle River). The Chester Creek Trail (7.5 miles), is the spine, starting at Westchester Lagoon and connecting to the University/ Medical District (UMED). The Campbell Creek Trail (7.5 miles) is the body, linking the UMED to the South Anchorage shopping district. These trails connect to each other through city streets and through the three largest parks: Russian Jack, Far North Bicentennial and Kincaid.

BENEFITS AND NEED

Safety Improvements:

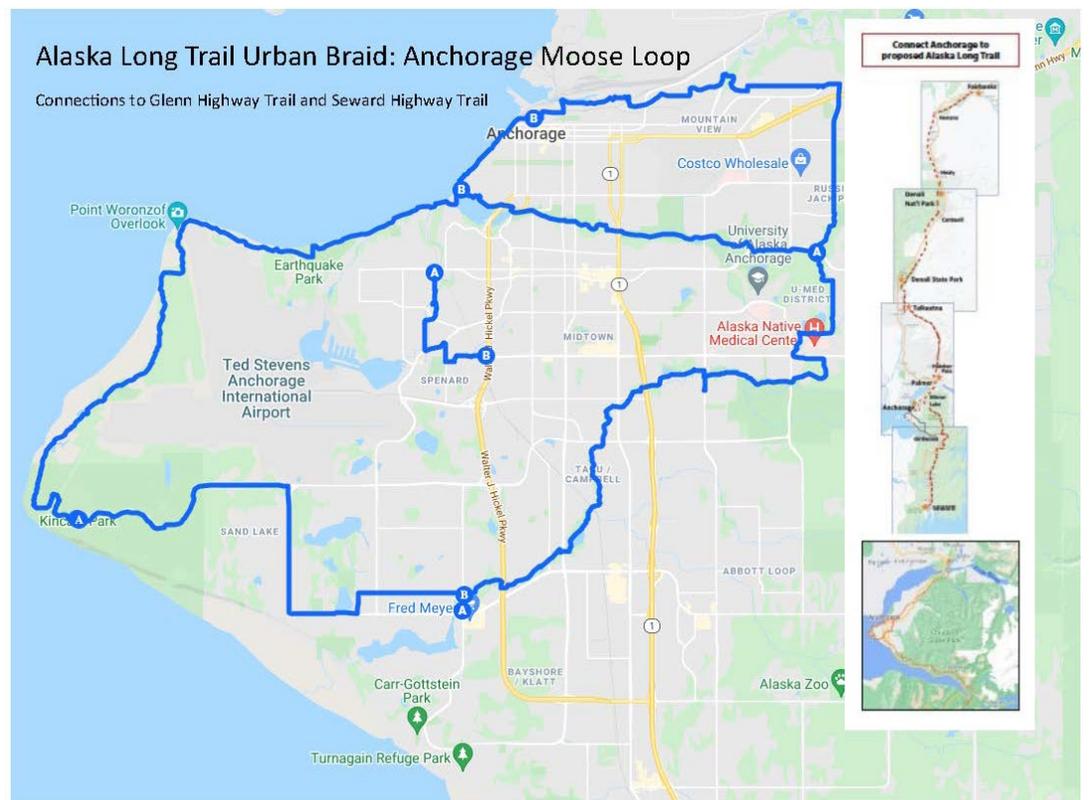
Erosion control is needed in multiple sections of the Moose Loop, particularly the Coastal Trail. Work is happening now to connect the Coastal Trail to Ship Creek, which connects to the Glenn Highway Trail.

Wayfinding: For experienced cyclists, the MOOSE LOOP can be enjoyed in its current form, but wayfinding signs and tools are needed for new users to navigate to the Alaska Long Trail. Half-mile marker signs with emergency locators were installed in 2019. A suite of wayfinding and interpretive signs has been developed and approved, awaiting funding.

PROJECT LEAD AND

PARTNERS: Anchorage Park Foundation, MOA

ESTIMATED COST: \$800,000



Peters Creek Upper Trail & Bridge

TPS# 66793

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: Eagle River – Chugiak districts

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Brushing and a new pedestrian bridge to open up an improved trail for hiking and hunting access for Four-Mile Valley Creek Loop trail in Chugach State Park. The trail needs brushing, outside the scope of what Chugach State Park is able to fund with the Recreational Trails Program for the coming fiscal year (RTP is funding only motorized projects presently). The trail has high significance to local residents, as it provides pack and saddle access to equestrian travelers, hunters, and hikers.

BENEFITS AND NEED

- Pack and saddle access to equestrian travelers, hunters, and hikers
- High significance to local residents

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS: Chugach State Park, AK DNR DPOR

USE: non-motorized, equestrian

ESTIMATED COST: \$30,000

Arctic to Indian Phase 1 Trail improvements

TPS# 66797

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: Anchorage districts

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase 1 improvements would flag and brush a winter trail. This route is part of the system of winter trails connecting Anchorage to the Iditarod Historic Trail and is one braid of the proposed Alaska Long Trail.

BENEFITS AND NEED

Phase 1 improvements would flag and brush a winter trail, an important recreation route. This route is part of the system of winter trails connecting Anchorage to the Iditarod Historic Trail and is one braid of the proposed Alaska Long Trail.

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS: Chugach State Park/ MOA (AWWU); JBER; Arctic Valley Ski Club

USE: Multi-use: motorized/non-motorized

ESTIMATED COST: \$20,000

Turnagain Arm Trail Maintenance and Extension

TPS# 66761

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: 13-28 House / H-N Senate

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will upgrade sections of degraded, very popular trail; one link on the Girdwood to Anchorage braid of Long Trail. The Turnagain Arm Trail follows a support route created during the 1910s to aid the construction of the Alaska Railroad. This trail meanders above the Seward Highway and offers sweeping views of Turnagain Arm. Thanks to its southern exposure, this is one of the first snow-free trails in the spring.

The Turnagain Arm Trail is 9.5 miles one way and accessed from several trailheads along the Seward Highway: Potter Creek, McHugh Creek, Rainbow Creek, and Windy Corner. Along its current course, the trail bridges several creeks, travels through eroded, muddy terrain, and continues along cliffs where landslides have been sloughing off sections of trail. A comprehensive list of maintenance needs exists for this popular year-round trail.

The Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan includes a roughly 1.5-mile extension of the southern terminus at Windy Corner to the Falls Creek Trailhead. This section of trail would switchback over a rocky ridge extending from South Suicide Peak to an elevation of approximately 500' ASL and offer immense views of the head of Turnagain Arm. This extension would tie into the existing Falls Creek Trailhead and terminate at the established trailhead there.

ESTIMATED COST

Maintenance Needs:

Boardwalk and tread materials: 50K

McHugh Creek Bridge resurfacing: 20K

Retaining structure improvements: 50K

Labor and dirt work: 100K

New trail segment: 150K

TOTAL: 370K



Crow Pass - Eagle River

TPS# 66792

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Alaska Long Trail project would upgrade the popular, spectacular but degrading Crow Pass Trail in Chugach State Park, which connects Girdwood and Eagle River. The 21-mile trail ascends from the Crow Creek Trailhead in Girdwood, through talus fields and mine ruins up to Crow Pass, near the toe of Raven Glacier. The trail descends from the snowfields and lakes at the pass, through alpine meadows and forests to a ford on Eagle River (no bridge yet). The route then trends west, paralleling Eagle River to the Eagle River Nature Center. This route is formally designated as a portion of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and is the premier overnight, point-to-point trail in Chugach State Park. Significant portions of the route need to be relocated and rebuilt. Chugach State Park staff and professional trail builders have done the in-field work needed to lay out the routes and estimate costs for this section needing substantial improvements.

Eagle River Valley: In much of this area the route runs right next to the actively eroding river. A steadily increasing percentage of the trail is disappearing into the river. This project would fund the critically needed trail reconstruction and reroute of about 5 miles of this 12-mile stretch of the trail, lifting the trail onto more stable and sustainable higher ground.

BENEFITS AND NEED

The project will significantly upgrade and reroute a high value, deteriorating trail, delivering the following benefits:

- Upgrade one critical link of the full Alaska Long Trail, and at the same time, provide a much improved day or short overnight recreation amenity, close to Alaska's largest city and most visited destination.
- Upgrade an important, historic section of the Iditarod supply route.
- Further expand options and opportunities on a trail important to local commercial outfitters and guides.
- Greatly improve safety of an increasingly hazardous trail, reducing regularly search and rescue costs to the state.
- Replace a near impossible-to-maintain social trail with a purpose-built, durable and sustainable trail.

LAND OWNERSHIP

The first 3 miles of the trail, from the Girdwood Trail head to Crow Pass crosses through Chugach National Forest. The remainder of the route, and all the projects outlined here, are entirely within Chugach State Park.

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS

Project lead: DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Chugach State Park

Partners: Alaska Trails' Trail Stewards Program (volunteer and paid trail crews)

PROJECT STATUS

This project is in the 2016 Chugach State Park Trail plan, and needs final route determination (design) and funds to carry out the needed improvements.

USE: nonmotorized

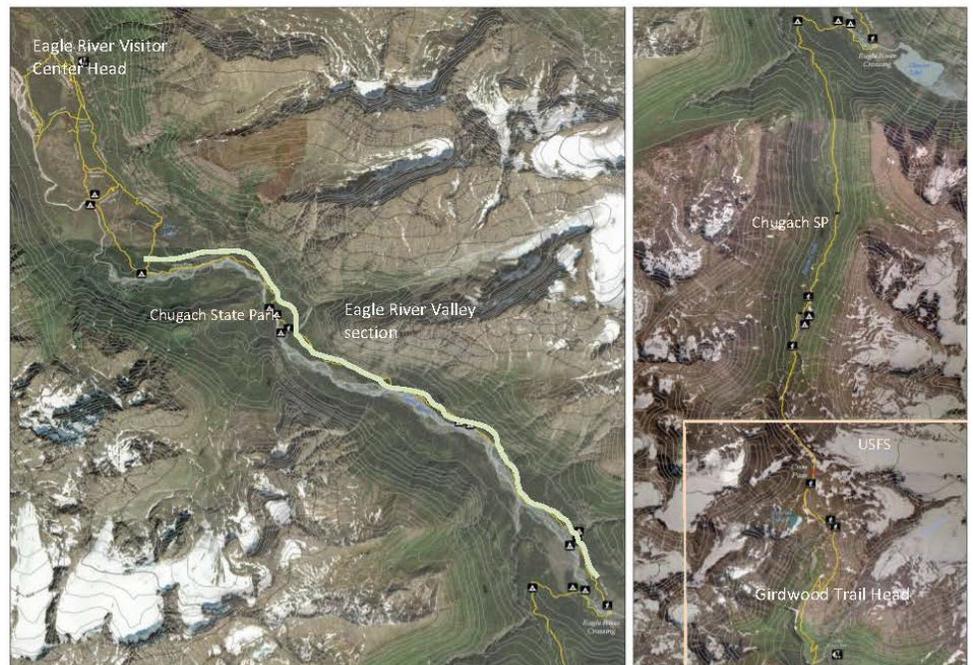
ESTIMATED COST:

Trail survey and design \$350,000; Eagle River Valley section \$900,000

Trail-side facilities to support and manage impacts of growing use including hardened campsites, restrooms, signage. \$150,000; Project oversight and management \$100,000

TOTAL: \$1,500,000

Crow Pass Trail



Glacier Creek Bridge - replacement for hand tram

TPS# 66766

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: 13-28 House / H-N Senate, areawide and statewide significance

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The conceptual bridge design is meant to balance cost, function and aesthetics to provide Girdwood residents and its visitors with a long-lasting replacement for the crossing over Glacier Creek formerly served by the hand tram along popular Winner Creek Trail. The proposed solution is a pedestrian suspension bridge with a 5' wide walking surface. As conceived, the suspension bridge will be of galvanized steel. This material will provide superior life span and reflects a design vernacular seen elsewhere in Girdwood, primarily associated with ski lifts and other elements at the Alyeska Resort. Other considerations are fall protection on the bridge as well as at the approaches to the bridge.

BENEFITS AND NEED

Winner Creek Trail in Girdwood is one of the most popular trails in the state of Alaska among both visitors and locals. It's an easy 3-mile hike or bike ride on a wide, well-developed trail with a gentle elevation gain that winds through America's northernmost rainforest, crosses a wooden bridge over a thundering blue-water gorge. The trail begins at Alyeska Resort and connects to Crow Creek Rd via a now-defunct hand tram across Glacier Creek. The tram closed in 2019 after two people fell from the tram's platform in separate incidents, leaving one person dead and the other with serious injuries. A replacement bridge has been identified as a viable safe alternative, <https://www.adn.com/outdoors-adventure/2021/06/30/girdwoods-winner-creek-hand-tram-unlikely-to-return-officials-say/>

A replacement bridge would provide the following benefits:

- Safety for travelers along Winner Creek Trail
- Faster access from Crow Creek Rd to Winner Creek Trail for emergencies (shorter distance from Crow Creek Rd than from Alyeska Resort)
- Key connection for the planned Alaska Long Trail route in the Girdwood Valley – a link between Iditarod National Historic Trail (over Crow Pass) and Upper Winner Creek Trail (over Berry Pass into Twentymile River and Portage Valleys)
- Addressing demand for visitation on Winner Creek Trail

LAND OWNERSHIP:

Municipality of Anchorage

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS

Municipality of Anchorage, US Forest Service, Alyeska Resort

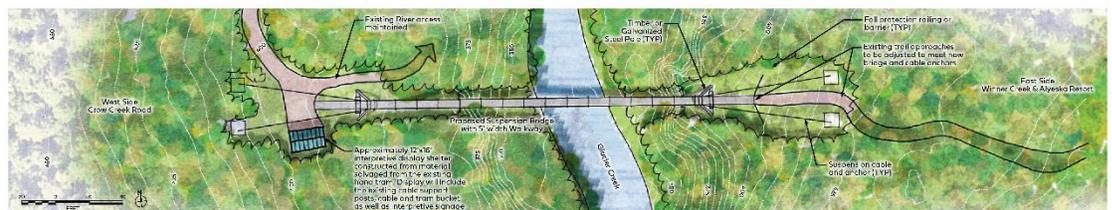
PROJECT STATUS

Design has been developed, MOA and partners are seeking funding for construction.

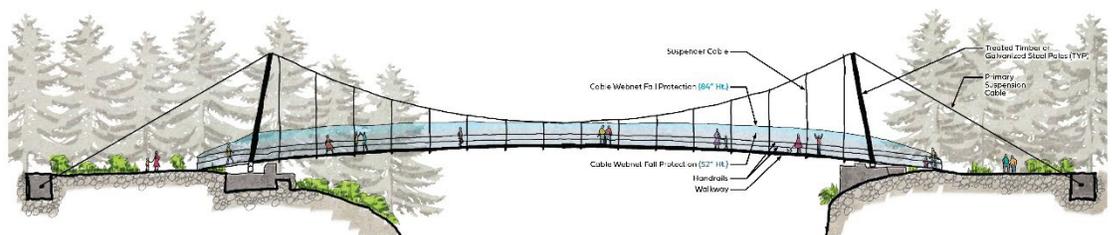
USE: nonmotorized

ESTIMATED COST:

Suspension Bridge Construction - \$1.2 million



Conceptual Site Plan



Conceptual Bridge Section
Fall protection cable webnet height (84 inches or 4 feet - 4 inches) top of hand rail. With option to include a double height (84 inch or 7 feet) cable webnet for additional fall protection.
See page 4 of 4 for an example of cable webnet.