

# Project Title: Alaska Trails - Alaska Long Trail - Ram Valley Access Trail and Trailhead Parking Lot

**TPS Number:** 68845

**Priority:** 1

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

**Federal Tax ID:** 73-1677483

**Grant Recipient:** Alaska Trails

**FY2025 State Funding Request:** \$1,000,000

One-Time Need

## Brief Project Description:

This project will construct a trail that accesses Ram Valley in Chugach State Park and an accompanying parking lot. The parking lot will be a revenue source for Chugach State Park and the trail will restore access to currently inaccessible public lands.

## Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$1,120,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$120,000)
FY2025 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$1,000,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

## Explanation of Other Funds:

\$100,000 from the State of Alaska FY2024 capital budget for planning and design (TPS# 67910) - work is underway and to be completed summer 2024.

Additionally, \$20,000 matching grant is secured.

## Detailed Project Description and Justification:

Ram Valley is a popular corner of Chugach State Park, located north of Eagle River and south of Eklutna Lake. The area has historically been popular with hunters, hikers, backpackers, skiers and climbers. Since 2020, access to Ram Valley has been effectively eliminated when the prior existing access, through private property at the discretion of the landowner, was revoked due to conflicts over parking and trespassing. Since then, Ram Valley and the surrounding environs have only been accessible by especially long and arduous routes - unsuitable for almost all users.

Providing access to Alaska's park lands is a central tenet of the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Alaska State Park system. Losing access to a large swathe of Chugach State Park, Alaska's most visited public land, disenfranchises Alaskans.

With the funding from FY2024 state capital budget (TPS# 67910), over the past 6 months Alaska Trails has worked in collaboration with Chugach State Park and other stakeholders to determine suitable access options for this valuable outdoor recreation destination, ensuring that community voices were heard, incorporated and respected so that access to Chugach State Park remains compatible with neighborhood values and private landowner rights.

As the access planning process concludes, the next phase is construction of a new, roughly 4-mile trail to Ram Valley. To avoid conflict with neighboring landowners and generate revenue for Alaska State Parks, an accompanying parking lot will be constructed as well, including an electronic fee station.

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The project has gone through a public review process. The trail which was formerly used to access Ram Valley was included in the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan (TMP) as trail ID# 209 and thus was a part of the public review process associated with the crafting of that document prior to its adoption. While the new trail will differ from this prior alignment, it will fulfill the spirit and intent of the

original access trail, thus not resulting in a meaningful or significant deviation from the TMP. Neighborhood and community council outreach will continue during the planning and construction phases to ensure that the local community's perspectives are included in the project.

Additionally, the Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board formed an ad-hoc Ram Valley Access Committee in early 2023 to assist in the resolution of the access issue in this section of Chugach State Park. The Committee will continue to be an important partner in this process.

**Project Timeline:**

Summer 2024 -- Planning and Design phase conclude.  
Fall 2024 -- RFPs for parking lot construction.  
Spring 2025 -- Parking lot construction contract awarded.  
Summer 2025 -- Parking lot construction commences; trail construction commences -- because of the constraints of the topography, trail construction will be done "by hand" by a field crew which may take up to two field seasons.  
Fall 2025 -- Parking lot construction complete.  
Summer 2026 -- Trail construction complete.

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

Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Chugach State Park and/or nonprofit partners.

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

<b>Name:</b>	Steve Cleary
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 100627 Anchorage, AK 99510
<b>Phone Number:</b>	(907)334-8049
<b>Email:</b>	steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org

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