

# Project Title: Alaska Long Trail - Byers Lake Loop Trail and Outlet Bridge

**TPS Number:** 68761

**Priority:** 4

**Agency:** Natural Resources

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

One-Time Need

## Brief Project Description:

The project will upgrade the Byers Lake Loop Trail to a Class III trail tread and replace the outlet bridge to restore the loop.

## Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$1,000,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2025 State Funding Request:	(\$1,000,000)
Project Deficit:	\$0

## Explanation of Other Funds:

2023 - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - \$1.4 million. Byers Lake is one of State Parks' current priorities, and in 2023 State Parks selected "Byers Lake Campground Improvements" project to be the recipient of the LWCF federal funding program. The LWCF funding will allow the expansion of the parking lot and the campground. The proposed CAPSIS project will work in tandem with these campground improvements, upgrading the adjacent trail and access to outdoor recreation.

## Detailed Project Description and Justification:

Byers Lake is a popular destination within Denali State Park. There are several public use cabins and a large campground located on the shores of the lake. The lake is a pristine setting that welcomes families from around the world and contributes a large percentage of fees revenue to the State Parks' budget. Byers Lake is also a key connector in the Alaska Long Trail (AKLT) system, providing a base for recreationists who use the Denali State Park segment of the AKLT.

Byers Lake Loop trail is one of the most popular hikes in the area. The trail is narrow, has poor sight lines and currently is not tied together as the outlet bridge has been "out" for several years after winter ice damaged it. Thus, one cannot complete the loop. This trail also provides access to three public use cabins and several water-accessible as well as hike-in tent sites on the east side of the lake which are underutilized due to the missing bridge.

The trail is now mostly a Class I and II level trail (minimally developed). This proposed project will develop a more family friendly Class III trail (widened and hardened) and create better access for people with mobility issues. The outcome of this project is to create a true loop trail once again, built to standards that also allow DPOR to utilize mechanized transport (ATVs) to maintain the trail more easily than they have been able to in the past.

There are two elements of this project.

1. Contract out for the entire loop trail to be graded, widened, and gravel hardened Class III trail tread approximately 72" to 120" wide depending on the location. This will include wider boardwalks on the west side along some bog areas as well. These improvements would allow a greater range of recreational activity along the trail, improve overall sight lines for safety and allow for more efficient maintenance.
2. Replace outlet bridge with similar design as was originally installed. Engineering designs were completed through project funding with Friends of State Parks, Mat-Su.

As with all trails in Denali State Park, they are included within the Denali State Park Management Plan, which calls out proposed upgrades for trails. The management plan went through the state public process for adoption.

**Project Timeline:**

Project funding will be broken into three phases over 2024-2026:

Phase I: Trail assessment, planning, and design

Phase II: Trail construction

Phase III: Bridge replacement

The project will be completed within three years.

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

DNR-DPOR

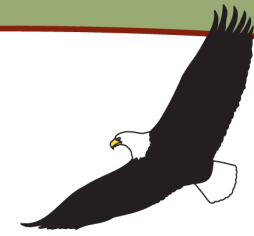
**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

**Name:** Stuart Leidner  
**Address:** 7278 East Bogard Road  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
**Phone Number:** (907)745-3975  
**Email:** stuart.leidner@alaska.gov

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

# Guide to

## K'esugi Ridge Trail System South



in Denali State Park

### **Ermine Hill Trail:**

**Allowable Uses:** Hiking

**Distance:** 3.7 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 1300 feet

**Difficulty:** Moderate

### **K'esugi Ridge Trail:**

(Ermine Hill Trail jct. to Cascade Trail jct.)

**Allowable Uses:** Hiking

**Distance:** 11.2 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 2000 feet (north to south)

**Difficulty:** Moderate to Difficult

### **Cascade Trail:**

**Allowable Uses:** Hiking

**Distance:** 2 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 1800 feet from Byers Lake

**Difficulty:** Difficult

### **Byers Lake Trail:**

**Allowable Uses:** Hiking, Biking, Skiing

**Distance:** 5.3 miles

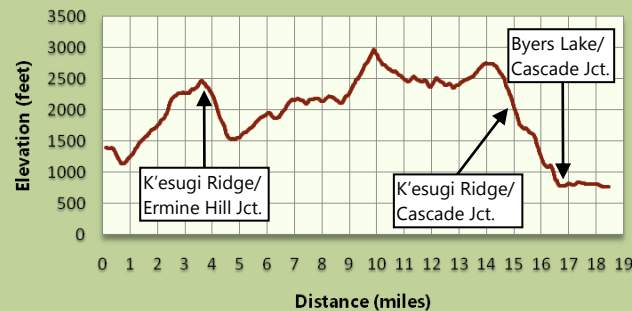
**Elevation Gain:** Less than 100 feet

**Difficulty:** Easy

### **Connecting the Trails:**

18.5 mile traverse from Ermine Hill Trailhead to Byers Lake Campground. 26.6 mile traverse from Ermine Hill Trailhead to Upper Troublesome Creek Trailhead.

### K'esugi Ridge Trail System South



### Special Features:

This trail system offers popular multi-day backpacking trips in south-central Alaska. Hiking is through rolling alpine and sub-alpine terrain with outstanding views of Denali, and numerous small glacially scoured lakes. Lower elevations are forested.

### Planning Your Route:

Most people hike from north to south because of less total elevation gain. Hikers can start from the Little Coal Creek Trailhead or Ermine Hill Trailhead and finish at Byers Lake Campground or Upper Troublesome Creek Trailhead (See Guide to K'esugi Ridge Trail System North & Guide to Upper Troublesome Creek Trail for more information). These are all one-way trips, so pick-up or drop-off arrangements must be made prior to departure. Day-hikes to timberline and around Byers Lake are also popular.



### Safety and Considerations:

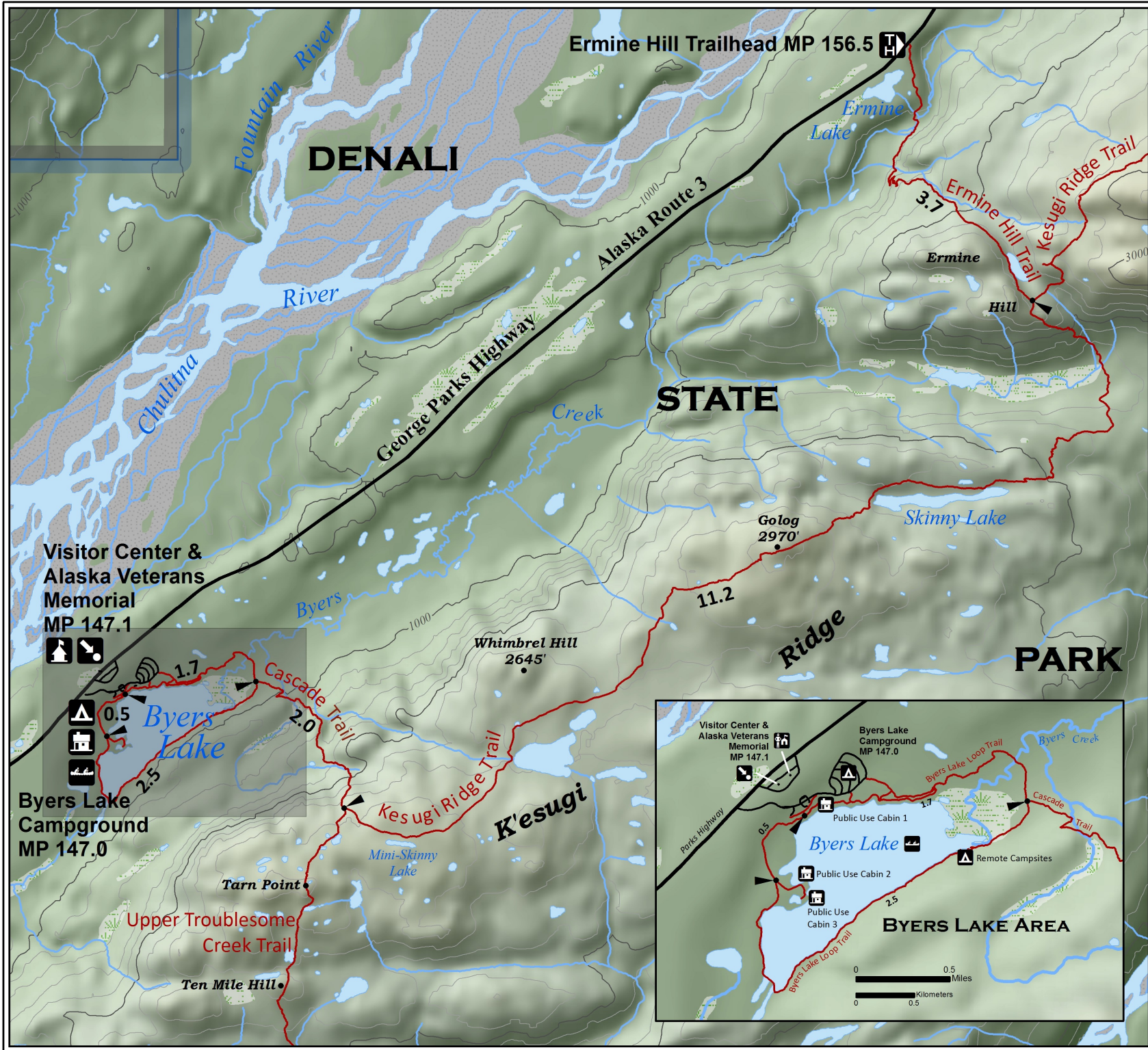
Weather on K'esugi Ridge can change fast. Be prepared with proper clothing and navigation tools in case low clouds move in. Some trails may experience seasonal closures due to high bear concentrations. Please respect closures and always be bear aware while traveling Denali's trails.

### Park Rules:

Open fires are prohibited, please use designated fire rings or a camp stove. Pets must be on a leash while in the trailhead parking lot, and under voice control on trails or in the backcountry. For more information, please contact the Mat-Su Area Parks Office at (907) 745-3975, or visit the following web address:

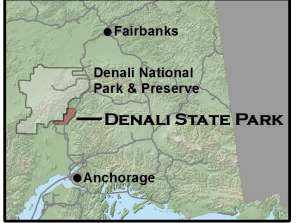
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/denali1.htm>





# Denali State Park

## K'esugi Ridge Trail System South



**Legend**

- Denali State Park Boundary
- State Recreation Areas
- Denali National Park Boundary
- Trails
- Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers/Lakes
- Gravel Bars
- Streams
- Wetlands
- Trailhead
- Campground
- Interest Point
- Visitor Center
- Public Use Cabins
- Non-Motorized Boating

Scale: 0 to 1 Miles / 0 to 1 Kilometers

Produced by: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Date Printed: January 2, 2016. Cartographer: Justin Wholey.

This map represents differential GPS data collected during the Alaska State Parks Trail Inventory Project that was conducted in conjunction with National Park Service (NPS) Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program, Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) Land Record Information Service (LRIS), Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), and Denali State Park.

Denali State Park: (907) 745-3975. Fax: (907) 745-0938. Alaska State Parks: [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks). Emergency: 911.

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