

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

TPS Number: 68845

Priority: 2

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

Federal Tax ID: 73-1677483

Grant Recipient: Alaska Trails

FY2026 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)
FY2026 State Funding Request:	(\$1,000,000)
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 Fall 2025.	
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effectively eliminated when the prior existing access, through private property at the discretion of the landowner, was revoked due to conflicts over parking and trespassing.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), 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 in 2025, 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.

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:

Fall 2025 -- Planning and Design phase conclude.

Fall 2025 -- RFPs for parking lot construction.

Spring 2026 -- Parking lot construction contract awarded.

Summer 2026 -- 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 2026 -- Parking lot construction complete.

Summer 2027 -- 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:

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

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



CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

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

February 23, 2024

Senator Kelly Merrick; Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov

Representative Jamie Allard; Representative.Jamie.Allard@akleg.gov

State Finance Committee; senate.finance@akleg.gov

House Finance Committee; house.finance@akleg.gov

Dear Alaska State Legislators and Finance Committee members,

We seek your support for the **Ram Valley Access Trail and Trailhead Parking Lot** project submitted into CAPSIS for inclusion in the FY2025 state capital budget.

Ram Valley is a beloved Chugach State Park destination, but no longer has reasonable, legal access. Providing access to Alaska's park lands is a central tenet of the Division 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.

In FY24, the legislature funded a feasibility study to determine a route to reestablish legal access to Ram Valley. Based on the forthcoming results of the feasibility study, we ask that the legislature fund the construction of this trail and its accompanying parking lot and access point. The accompanying parking lot - on Chugach State Park lands - will also provide a much needed revenue stream for Chugach State Park while reducing conflicts with landowners near Ram Valley.

This trail is also a potential braid of the Alaska Long Trail. When complete, the Alaska Long Trail will become a world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain and diverse communities from Seward to Fairbanks. It is designed to be a braided, four-season trail system for hikers, bikers, skiers, ATV-ers, and snowmachiners.

We ask that you support the inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail projects - including the **Ram Valley Access Trail and Trailhead Parking Lot** project - in the FY2025 state capital budget.

Sincerely,

Board Chair

Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board

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

February 8, 2023

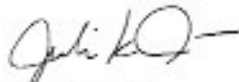
Mariyam Medovaya
Project Coordinator, Alaska Trails

Dear Ms. Medovaya:

On February 8, 2023, at the regularly scheduled public meeting of the Eagle River Valley Community Council, community members voted unanimously to support a request by Alaska Trails Initiative for capital funds through the Alaska State Legislature under CAPSIS to provide public access to Ram Valley in Chugach State Park. Alaska Trails Initiative is seeking \$100K for planning and research that will ultimately lead to the construction of a sustainable hiking trail on state land from Eagle River Road to Ram Valley.

This capital request will address a long standing Chugach State Park access issue in Eagle River and accommodate, in the long term, use of Eagle River and Chugach State Park in the creation of the proposed "Long Trail" from Seward to Fairbanks.

Sincerely,



Julie Jessen

President, Eagle River Valley Community Council



Joy Web

Secretary, Eagle River Valley Community Council

Municipal Clerk's Office

Approved

Date: March 15, 2022

Submitted by: Assembly Chair LaFrance,
Assembly Vice Chair Constant,
Assembly Members Dunbar,
Petersen, Quinn-Davidson,
Rivera, Weddleton, and Zaletel

Reviewed by: Assembly Counsel

For reading: March 15, 2022

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2022-90

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING THE
ALASKA LONG TRAIL.**

WHEREAS, the vision for the Alaska Long Trail is 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; and

WHEREAS, with some of the world's most stunning wild places, Alaska is overdue in creating a connected trail system with goals to improve access, build a stronger, more durable economy, improve quality of life, encourage healthy lifestyles, celebrate heritage and sustain what makes Alaska unique; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Long Trail route from Seward to Fairbanks, where a substantial portion of public land trails already exist, has strong bipartisan support from local, state and national elected officials, businesses and organizations; and

WHEREAS, as Alaska's largest city and airport hub, Anchorage would connect to the Alaska Long Trail through a braided trail system from the Moose Loop trails in Anchorage north to Palmer and the Mat-Su, along the spectacular Tikahtnu-Cook Inlet and Knik River valleys and south along the breathtaking, awe-inspiring Turnagain Arm to Girdwood; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Long Trail braid from Anchorage to the south needs improved, safe, bicycle and pedestrian access along the Seward Highway from Potter Marsh to Indian, connecting to the Bird to Gird trail and into Girdwood, then connecting south into Chugach National Forest and looping back north over Crow Pass to Eagle River; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Long Trail braid from Anchorage to the north needs improved, safe and attractive multi-use access along the Glenn Highway Trail from Anchorage to the communities of Chugiak, Eagle River, Eklutna and beyond to the Mat-Su, where the trail would continue north to Fairbanks; and

WHEREAS, the Appalachian, Pacific Crest and other Long Trails are hugely popular attractions and economic drivers; for example, the Appalachian Trail attracts 3 million visitors each year to shop, dine, stay and hike a portion of the 2000+ mile trail; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Anchorage residents support trails through annual voter-approved
2 bonds, and the Alaska Long Trail stands to leverage the value of Anchorage's
3 existing trail system, bringing major recreation and economic benefits to Anchorage
4 and Alaska by attracting a range of travelers from around the world to shop, dine,
5 stay and recreate; and
6

7 **WHEREAS**, now is the time to invest in the future of Anchorage and Alaska's
8 outdoor recreation, tourism and small business economies by supporting the
9 development of an iconic trail that will stand alongside the other grand trails of the
10 nation.
11

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY**
13 **SUPPORTS THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL AND ENCOURAGES INVESTMENT AT**
14 **THE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL.**
15

16
17 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 15th day of March,
18 2022.
19

20
21 

22
23 _____
24 Chair

25
26
27
28
29 ATTEST:



Municipal Clerk



February 18, 2025

Honorable Alaska State Legislators:

Re: Support for Alaska Long Trail Capital Improvement Projects

Thank you for supporting the Alaska Long Trail (AKLT). Investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure keeps Alaskans healthy and connected and will put Alaska on the map as the outdoor epicenter of the world.

The 13 AKLT projects submitted to CAPSIS would invest approximately \$12 million to build or improve 138 miles. These investments leverage local and federal funding and will have a resounding positive impact on Alaska communities. They create jobs, they support the stories that bind us together, and they help facilitate a wide variety of quality-of-life activities from hiking, biking, snowmachining, hunting and fishing to travel and tourism. They are supported by a growing coalition of business leaders, public land agencies, local governments, neighborhoods, and Alaska Native leaders.

We support all of the AKLT projects from our coalition partners across the state, including seven projects in Chugach State Park, two projects in Chugiak Eagle River, two in the Mat-Su Borough and two in Denali State Park. In addition, we want to highlight the Anchorage project we submitted to CAPSIS, to build a safe non-motorized connection from the Glenn Highway Trail to the newly completed Chugach Foothills trail in Far North Bicentennial Park.

Thanks for your past support for the AKLT. Your investments in new trail segments and wayfinding will help more than 1.5 million visitors to Anchorage learn about the Alaska Long Trail and want to come back to Alaska communities again and again to complete new segments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Nordlund". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Beth" and last name "Nordlund" clearly distinguishable.

Beth Nordlund, Executive Director
Anchorage Park Foundation



Dear Alaska Legislators:

2/19/2025

Alaska Trails, the statewide non-profit, is writing on behalf of the Alaska Long Trail Coalition to request the inclusion of the Seward-to-Fairbanks [Alaska Long Trail](#) projects (submitted into CAPSIS) into FY2026 State's capital budget. The specific request is for **13 projects** to fill key shovel-ready and planning-ready gaps along the length of the planned route. Some of these projects have federal/local matching funds or complimentary funds already secured, and some projects build on the funding received through the state capital budget over the past three years (**thank you!**).

The Alaska Long Trail, when complete, will become a world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain and diverse communities from Seward to Fairbanks, embracing the many ways (motorized and non-motorized) Alaskans recreate outdoors and bolstering the Alaska economy by attracting visitors from all over the world.

Specific benefits include:

- **Economic Impact** – Outdoor recreation infrastructure *is essential* infrastructure, building on Alaska's global competitive advantage, and supporting local jobs, business opportunities, and a stronger, more durable AK economy. If typical year's out-of-state travelers had reasons to spend one more day in Alaska, the result would be an additional \$250M in annual spending in our state.
- **Health Benefits** – Long Trails have an ability to inspire use, even if for a single day. The Long Trail will make it inviting and easier for a larger portion of Alaskans to be active, healthy, and happy outside.
- **Projects are Action-Ready** – Funding these investments will create much needed construction jobs in the near term and build skills that will be in demand continuing into the future.
- **Multi-Use** – The Long Trail will be an *Alaska* long trail; a braided, four-season trail system designed for hikers, bikers, skiers, ATV's, snowmachines, for both day and multi-day use.

We ask that you support the inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail projects, submitted into CAPSIS, in the FY2026 state capital budget.

Please call or write if you have questions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Steve Cleary, Alaska Trails Executive Director

steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org

PO Box 100627
Anchorage, AK 99510
office@alaska-trails.org
907-334-8049

www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA LONG TRAIL - CAPSIS FY2026 PROJECTS

ID #	TPS #	Project	Amount	Match funds secured	Recipient	Land Manager/Area	Districts	Previously Submitted?	Planning, New construction, Repairs/Improvements	Mileage
1	68890	Glenn Highway to Far North Bicentennial Park	\$110,000		Anchorage Park Foundation	Municipality of Anchorage	21-K, 22-K	YES	Planning	5
2	68868	Connect Gruening Middle School to Chugach State Park - Lower Eagle River Trail	\$169,916		Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR)	Chugach State Park	23-L	YES	New construction	1
3	69711	Crow Pass Trail Realignment - Priority 3 - Eagle River Crossing to Heidi's Knob	\$196,001	Supported by FY23 Planning Funds	DNR DPOR	Chugach State Park	23-L/ 9-E	NO	Repairs/Improvements	1.1
4	68766	Alaska Long Trail - Talkeetna Mountains Planning	\$300,000	\$200,000	Alaska Trails	Mat-Su Borough & AK DMLW	30-O, 29-O	NO	Planning	85
5	68764	Little Coal Creek Trail Upgrades	\$450,000		DNR DPOR	Denali State Park	30-O	NO	Repairs/Improvements	5
6	68762	Ermine Hill Trail Upgrades	\$450,000		DNR DPOR	Denali State Park	30-O	NO	Repairs/Improvements	5
7	68012	Failed Boardwalk Replacement - Lower Eagle River Trail	\$500,000		DNR DPOR	Chugach State Park	23-L	YES	Repairs/Improvements	2
8	69712	Crow Pass Improvements Park Priority #2 - Raven Creek Gorge Bridge and Clear Creek Bridge	\$788,987	Supported by FY23 Planning Funds	DNR DPOR	Chugach State Park	23-L/ 9-E	NO	Repairs/Improvements	0.4
9	68845	Ram Valley Access Trail and Trailhead Parking Lot	\$1,000,000		Alaska Trails	Chugach State Park	23-L	YES	New construction	4
10	69713	Crow Pass Trail Realignment - Priority 1 - Icicle Creek Reroute & Bridge	\$1,115,000	Supported by FY23 Planning Funds	DNR DPOR	Chugach State Park	23-L/ 9-E	NO	Repairs/Improvements	2
11	69702	Iditarod Trail Construction Connecting Chugiak High School to Cook Inlet	\$1,500,000		Muni of Anchorage	Muni of Anchorage	23-L/ 9-E	NO	Repairs/Improvements	1.5
12	66755	GPRA Traverse and Little Susitna Loop	\$2,250,000	\$250,000	Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation	Mat-Su Borough & AK DNR DPOR	29-O	YES	New construction	12
13	68770	Ship Creek Trail "Arctic to Indian"	\$3,000,000		Alaska Trails	Chugach State Park	23-L	YES	New construction	13.5

TOTAL

\$11,829,904

TOTAL MILES 137.5

TOTAL NEW

CONSTRUCTION MILES 30.5

TOTAL REPAIRS MILES 17

TOTAL PLANNING MILES 90

Alaska Long Trail CAPSIS FY26

Alaska Long Trail Corridor*

-  Existing Trails
-  Identified Gaps
-  Water Route

Land Ownership**

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

CAPSIS Project

-  Project ID number

*Corridor shown is simplified and may not accurately reflect the alignment. Refer to the region maps in the AKLT workbook for detailed information.

Existing Trails: recommended trails and routes

Identified gaps: concepts, gaps, road connections, and work in progress.

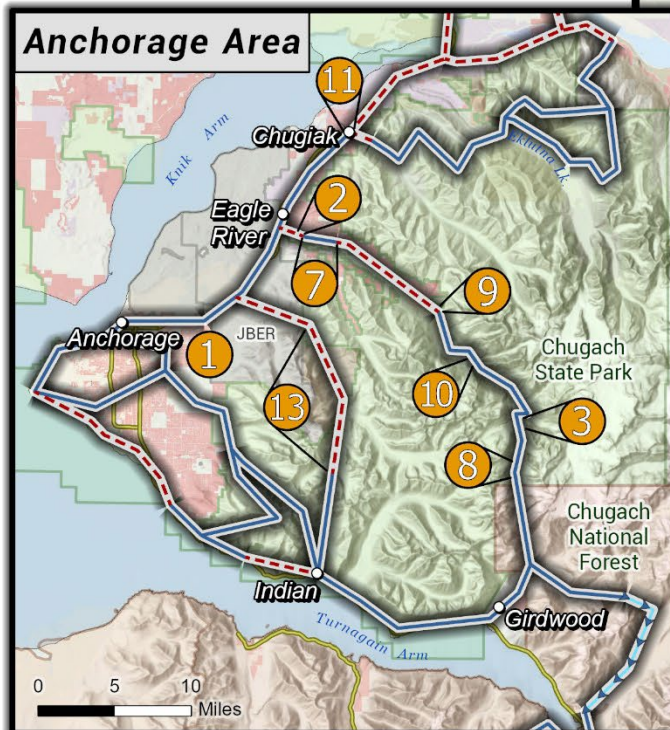
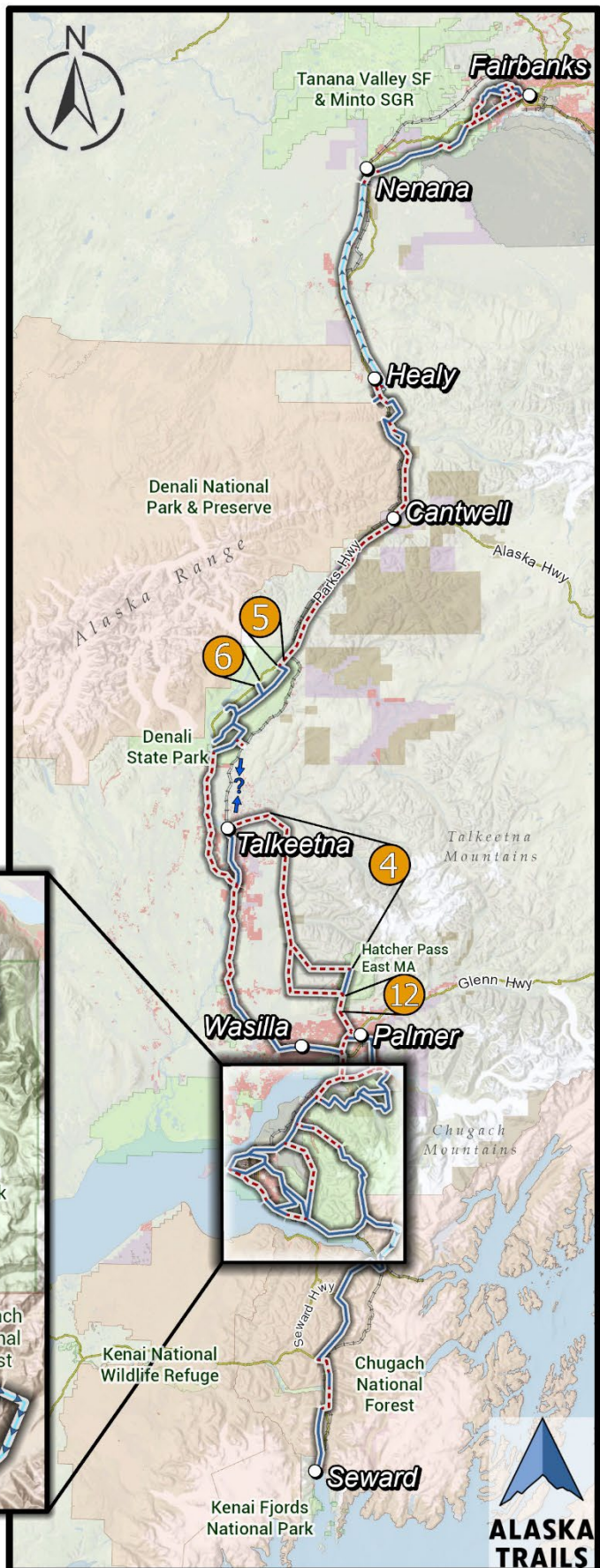
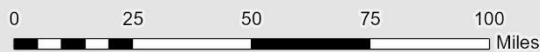
**Land ownership parcels within 25 miles of the AKLT corridor

State: parks, preserves, recreation, and special management areas

Federal: parks, preserves, and forests

Data Sources: ADNRR, ADFG, Alaska Trails, AKLT Coalition, AKDOT, BLM, Denali Borough, Esri, FNSB, KPB, MOA, NPS, USFS, USFWS

Created: 2/21/2025



RESOLUTIONS AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Numerous organizations, agencies, local governments, and individuals expressed support for the Alaska Long Trail over 2021 - 2025. Below is the list of organizations, agencies, and local governments that have sent letters of support and passed resolutions in support of the project.



Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA)	statewide
National Park Service	statewide
Alaska Huts Association (AHA)	statewide
Alaska Trails	statewide
Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects	statewide
Alaska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	statewide
Mountaineering Club of Alaska	statewide
Mat-Su Borough Assembly	Mat-Su
City of Palmer	Mat-Su
Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)	Mat-Su
Mat-Su Health Foundation	Mat-Su
Skeetawk, Hatcher Alpine Xperience	Mat-Su
Alaska State Parks - Mat-Su/Copper Basin Regional Office	Mat-Su
City of Seward	Kenai
Kenai Mountains – Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area (KMTA)	Kenai
Kenai Backcountry Horsemen	Kenai
Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly	Interior
Denali Borough Assembly	Interior
Explore Fairbanks	Interior
Interior Trails Quarterly	Interior
Fairbanks Cycle Club	Interior
Nordic Ski Club Fairbanks	Interior
Interior Trails Preservation Coalition	Interior
Anchorage Assembly	Anchorage
Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board	Anchorage
Chugach Mountain Bike Riders	Anchorage
Eklutna Valley Community Council	Anchorage
Eagle River Valley Community Council	Anchorage
Anchorage Ski Club	Anchorage
Girdwood Board of Supervisors	Anchorage
Girdwood Trails Committee	Anchorage
Latitude 61 Girdwood	Anchorage
Anchorage Park Foundation	Anchorage
Single Track Advocates, Anchorage	Anchorage
Roadmap to a Vital and Safe Anchorage	Anchorage
Anchorage Trails	Anchorage