



NEWSLETTER

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

ALASKA TRAILS FUNDRAISER GOES VIRTUAL WITH 'TAKE A HIKE'

It's been quite a year. Through all the uncertainty, we were reminded just how much we value our trails in Alaska. Judging from the crowded trailheads, you feel the same way. Now more than ever, we're committed to building, maintaining, and planning for a sustainable future for trails in Alaska. Join us by participating in Take A Hike (Or Whatever You Like)!

It's simple:

- From October 3-11, Take A Hike—or bike or run or walk—and then make a donation to Alaska Trails
- Donors who give over \$100 will be eligible for a prize drawing at the end of the week (and we're talking gift cards, not just a hat or shirt)
- Tag us in your photos on social media and we'll reshare them



Support the great work of Alaska Trails and Take A Hike! Check out our Facebook Event here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/350060749385023>

ALASKA TRAILS TO APPLY FOR TWO RTP GRANTS FOR 2021

Alaska Trails is excited to announce two grant applications to the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for 2021.

The first will complete the re-route of the Little O'Malley Peak Trail in Chugach State Park and the other is for brushing of the Eklutna Lakeside Trail.

Lots of great fall colors out there now, but we are thinking ahead to 2021 and beyond to create and maintain great trails. Please visit our website for more details at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/rtp-projects>

TRAILHEAD TUESDAY CELEBRATES TRAILS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

SUBMIT On our Facebook page we try to highlight a new trail every Tuesday. We'd love for you to submit a trail! This Google form has all the info we need: <https://forms.gle/4aTMougo5yCc2AT28>. You can also message us on Facebook or send us an email to: steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org. (We'll need a photo and short description of the trail and why you like it. We'd also appreciate if you could include a link that leads to a website with more information about the trail.)

We'll keep including the Trailhead Tuesdays in this newsletter (for our non-Facebook members and everyone else). If you are on Facebook and want to see them sooner, just like our page. Check out these recent Trailhead Tuesdays!

LOST LAKE TRAIL – KENAI PENINSULA

Sept. 29: It's #TrailheadTuesday! Today we're heading to the Lost Lake Trail, which is a segment of the longer Iditarod National Historic Trail and home of the Dena'ina and Alutiiq people. Lost Lake is a beautiful hike or bike. With snow later into the Spring than other places, the trail is a gem that rises up on both sides to a beautiful ridge that skirts the calm lake and gives great views of the mountains and glaciers that ring the area. It's nearly 16 miles makes a great backpack, through-hike or run. The lake is mid-way along the trail and in the fall blueberries abound. The bridge in the attached photo is one that Alaska Trails helped repair with funding from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance.



REED LAKES TRAIL – HATCHER PASS

Sept. 22: It's #TrailheadTuesday! Today we're heading to Reed Lakes in the Hatcher Pass area, home of the Dena'ina peoples.



Reed Lakes has something for everyone – snow lasts long in the Spring and Fall brings berries and berry pickers galore.

The first part of the trail is wide and pleasant for all ages and abilities and offers stunning views of the mountains of Hatcher Pass. After a bit more than a mile, the trail starts up toward a series of waterfalls and crosses many challenging rocky areas. Two lakes give the trail its name and are reached

by the steep and rocky trail, with the upper one being a 9-mile round trip.

More info can be found on the DNR Hatcher Pass brochure: <http://bit.ly/hatcherpassbrochure>

BISON GULCH TRAIL – DENALI FRONTCOUNTRY

Sept. 15: It's #TrailheadTuesday! Today we're heading to the Bison Gulch Trail in the Denali frontcountry, home of the Tanana peoples. Bison Gulch offers what is too often typical of Alaskan trails – a popular but informal social trail and roadside parking area, neither of which is sized, designed or located to be safe and sustainable. Denali Borough and the National Park Service are working towards two improvements: first, to relocate the current informal



roadside parking area across the Parks Highway to create a new trail head on the west side of the road, and second, to create a new, well designed trail system, including inviting 2-3 mile loops, for both easy and more adventuresome hiking or cross-country skiing.

This important, multi-agency project offers an opportunity for creating additional trails in the Denali frontcountry, with convenient access from the Parks Highway and a connection into Denali National Park. The result will be more options for local and visiting trail users to have a convenient, year-round way to enjoy “wilderness” recreation. Trail info at: <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/alaska/bison-gulch>

GOLD MINT TRAIL – HATCHER PASS

Sept. 1: It's #TrailheadTuesday, and we're heading to the Gold Mint Trail in Hatcher Pass, home of the Dena'ina peoples. The trails in Hatcher Pass are distinct and beautiful. The Gold Mint Trail offers the virtue of an easy, inviting pathway for the first 4-5 miles, but also rewards more adventurous hikers (or bikers or horseback riders) who want to double that distance and climb up to the even more spectacular Mint glacial headwaters. More info can be found on the DNR Hatcher Pass brochure: <http://bit.ly/hatcherpassbrochure>



SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Sept 25: It's been a busy fall - Alaska Trails was pleased to help Chugach State Park with some work on the Crow Pass Trail this week. Here's a report from Tim Gurnett:

"There are now 2 new bridges in the park, one over Icicle Creek and the other over Thunder Creek. Mike, Sean, Jared and I toiled with this project all summer and overcame a lot of challenges. We are very pleased with the end results.

Big Thank you to Alaska Trails (Blaine, Kristen, Mark Spano) and our volunteer Justin Holtz. Their efforts were crucial in the completion of this phase of the project.

This project was partly funded by a Recreation Trails Program Grant."



September 10: More before and after magic from our crew working on the new Little O'Malley Peak Trail. We're working on this project in partnership with the Chugach Park Fund and Chugach State Park. This trail will replace the badly eroded O'Malley Gully Trail with a new, sustainable trail that will provide better access to the Ball Field. We're hoping to have this section open soon, but it's not quite ready yet. For your safety and the safety of our crew, please stay off it for now. Thanks to crew member Gemma Winston for keeping us updated on the progress!

September 9: It's been a rainy Sept. in southcentral, but now the sun is out, and the Bird To Gird Trail is resurfaced and restriped for your next adventure. Alaska Trails was able to accomplish this work thanks to funding from the Recreational Trails Program. Thanks to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Federal Highway Administration for this grant-funded project.



September 2: Check out the awesome video Max Romey made about The Alaska Long Trail! We think it's time for Alaska to invest in its future by creating a route that will stand with the other great long trails of the world. You can see the video and learn more about this ambitious project on our website at <https://www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail>

To see more posts like these, see our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/alaskatrails/>

FOUR EASY WAYS TO HELP FUND ALASKA TRAILS

With the help of other organizations, you can help Alaska Trails continue advocating for trails.

FRED MEYER REWARDS: Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer



Rewards Card to Alaska Trails at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for Alaska Trails or by our nonprofit number – KU871. Then, every time you shop and use your rewards card, you are helping Alaska Trails earn a donation! You still earn your rewards points, fuel points, and rebates, just as you do today.

AMAZONSMILE: If you shop at Amazon, please take the simple extra step of signing up for AmazonSmile.



It's the same Amazon website, but when you shop from AmazonSmile, you can make a donation to Alaska Trails at the same time: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/73-1677483>

GOODSEARCH: GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per



search, to charities designated by the user. You use it just as you would any search engine, and, it's powered by Yahoo!. Just go to www.goodsearch.org and

be sure to enter Alaska Trails as the charity you want to support.

BAGOY'S: Anchorage-based Bagoy's Florist and Home helps through its Helping Hands web fundraising program (<https://www.bagoys.com/programs/charitable-giving/>). When you order online from Bagoy's (www.bagoys.com) there is a check box at the bottom of the payment page that says "This is a Helping Hands order." When you check that box, the list of enrolled organizations are shown and you can choose Alaska Trails from the list.



ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILERS READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



The trails building and maintenance season is not over yet. Don't forget that Alaska Trails has mobile tool caches available to loan to organized trail groups in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. One cache is in the Fairbanks area and the other is in Anchorage/Mat-Su Valley area.

The trailers have a bunch of trail tools including McLeods, Pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much, much more. If you would like to borrow one of the caches, please contact us (info on masthead).

ALASKA TRAILS (IN THE NEWS) LINKS

- New boardwalk at local trail being built with municipal CARES Act funding: <https://tinyurl.com/y3y69brf>

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

STATE PARKS AND REC ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR RTP GRANTS

APPLY The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is accepting applications for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for FY2021.



The division will be accepting all categories of projects this year, including stipulation 1, 2, and 3 projects. Last year, due to staffing cuts and a short timeline, applications for projects were limited to stipulation 1 projects, which have either no or minimal environmental, cultural, and social, etc., impacts. Projects were almost exclusively limited to brushing and clearing trails and minor trail repair within an existing footprint.

Applications are due by October 23.

Both the RTP Application and RTP Budget Workbook have been updated for this year. If you are interested in applying for an RTP award, please visit the division's website at

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation administers Alaska's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) RTP grant. The division offers competitive, reimbursable, matching trail grants for maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the application process, please send emails to Parks.RTPGrantApp@alaska.gov

DENALI NATIONAL PARK RELEASES WONDER LAKE AREA SUMMARY

Curious about what others think of trail management near Wonder Lake and Kantishna in Denali National Park and Preserve? The National Park Service recently released a summary of comments regarding a range of proposals the park service issued in fall 2019.

The proposals and comments include more than trails, but trails are a main focus of this planning effort. The summary "condenses and shares the comments received in response" to the range of proposals.

According to the park service: "The Summary does not include a response from or endorsement by the National Park Service (NPS).

"The NPS will use the substantive comments gathered to inform the scope of the Plan and resulting NEPA actions moving forward."

Find the summary at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=106524>

To find out specifically about trails, download the document and do a search for "trail".

Here are a couple of excerpts from the summary:

- Comments ranged from supporting all the proposed trail development actions to none of them. Most comments on day use trail development were supportive of actions that could improve a limited number of hiking trails.
- Most responders opposed the construction of long backcountry trails.



- Some of those opposed to long trails in Kantishna would rather see that development occurs closer to the park entrance, where more visitors could benefit from such a large undertaking.
- Responses regarding trailheads were limited, but the few responders did see value in consolidating and appropriately signing trailhead locations.

Photo of Wonder Lake courtesy of the National Park Service

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE HELD FOR NEW BISON GULCH PARKING AREA

An online open house will be held for the Bison Gulch Parking Area and Trail Enhancement project near Healy.

This project seeks to improve access to Mt. Healy for recreational purposes. The parking lot that people currently use to access the Mt. Healy's Bison Gulch Trail lies on the east side of the Parks Highway near Bison Gulch. However, the mountain and trail like on the west side of the highway. Hikers are forced to cross a section of highway that is on a hill and a curve.

This project would relocate the parking lot to the west side of the Parks Highway and closer to Antler Creek, which is to the north of the current parking lot. From the proposed parking lot site, trail users would have direct access from the parking area to a new trailhead location.

The online open house will be available at

- <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c28faf27fd3e43b1a687063883b0f458>
- Or the project website: <http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/>.

The DOT&PF invites members of the public to submit comments by email to jennifer.wright@alaska.gov. The online open house will be available and public comment period extend **from September 18, 2020 to October 9, 2020.**

- Bison Gulch project aims for safer trail access (News-Miner): <https://tinyurl.com/yybngxg5>

FACEBOOK DISCUSSION

The proposed project has generated comments on the Fairbanks Area Hiking Club Fan page on Facebook. Stan Justice has brought up concerns. His comments have brought a mix of replies. See a sampling below.

Stan Justice

Sept 25: Save Bison Gulch Trailhead! I have examined google earth and quad maps to conclude the proposed Antler Creek Trailhead does not improve access to Mt. Healy. The new trailhead adds at least two miles round trip and lacks the great views of the Nenana Gorge that we get from the Bison Gulch Trailhead. I suspect the Antler Creek Trail is a wheeler trail. (you can see it from space) And the connecting trail from the new parking area would be constructed later (if at all). I see us having to walk the highway to get to the Mt. Healy trail or more likely we will just park along the highway like we do for Triple Lakes trail.



The safety issue at Bison Gulch could be resolved by building a trail under the Bison Gulch bridge so people don't have to cross the highway. The messy social trail maze at the start of the Mt. Healy trail could go away. A new start trail would run along the bluff above Bison Gulch for a ways and then cut over to the ridge.

Comments go to jennifer.wright@alaska.gov And thank you to Jennifer for hearing our concerns.

Donna Gardino

Stan Justice so, I have hiked both routes and have enjoyed them. I am not about getting to the top but enjoying the adventure. We actually chose the Antler Creek route on our last visit for a quick hike.

Karen Clautice

That's a long, hard steep hike to get to Mt Healy--it doesn't need extra miles added to it. And the current trail is so special because you get great views almost immediately.

Bryant Wright

Adding distance does add time, but also makes the trail less steep, so more people of lesser ability or fitness levels can access ridgeline views. If there were a less steep trail, you could also more easily use it in the winter. It seems like a reasonable idea to me. Here is a link to an earlier iteration describing this project in the Alaska Trails Statewide Investment Strategy (click on link for Chapter 3 Denali Borough): <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-investment-strategy>

ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE'S CONFLUENCE SUMMIT TO GO VIRTUAL

Good news! It's easier than ever to attend the 5th Annual Confluence Summit this year, which will be held **October 27-29**.

Not so great news: In the interest of public health, we have decided to postpone meeting in person in Fairbanks until 2021. Registration opens mid-September to Zoom into Confluence from the comfort of wherever you are working. You can expect the same great quality of speakers, info sharing, and lively discussions but in a pared down agenda to limit screen fatigue.

"Confluence: Summit on the Outdoors," organized by the Alaska Outdoor Alliance (AOA), is an annual conference where Alaskans come together to discuss trends in outdoor recreation and to share ideas to expand the sector.

This year's theme is Re-Imagining Alaska's Outdoors. We are excited to announce Sen. Lisa Murkowski will help open the conference on Oct. 27. Afterward, we'll explore visions for the future of public land management, tourism, active transportation, and outdoor Rx for healthier Alaskans.

On the last day, after an overview of national policy priorities from REI's Director of Government and Community Affairs, roll up your sleeves, put your thinking cap on, and join an idea jam designed to develop strategies to strengthen and prioritize our own statewide policy and funding objectives. Draft details and speakers can be found on the AOA's Confluence page: www.alaskaoutdooralliance.org/confluence-ak



Introducing AOA's Brown Bag Lunch & Learn Series!

On Wednesdays beginning Sept. 30 at noon, AOA will begin a series of hour-long discussions to jump start the creative juices as we Re-Imagine Alaska's Outdoors. These casual lunch sessions hosted by leaders from our industry's various enthusiast stakeholders aim to get gears turning and inspiration heightened in

the weeks leading up to the Confluence Summit. Topics and speakers will be announced mid-September. Get ready to nourish body and mind during AOA's FREE Lunch & Learn series **Sept. 30, Oct. 7, 14 and 21**.
From Alaska Outdoor Alliance email

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL APPLICATIONS DUE SOON

APPLY Some applications for designating a trail as a National Recreation Trail are due by November 1.



For trails on private, city, county, or state land, or on federal land NOT overseen by the Department of Agriculture, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Those applications are **due on November 1 of each year**.

For trails on National Forests, National Grasslands, and National Recreation Areas and associated lands, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Those may be submitted anytime, but must be submitted by February 15 to be included in publicity with DOI designations each June.

For more information see: www.americantrails.org/national-recreation-trails/apply

ALASKA WALK/BIKE CONFERENCE VIDEOS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Videos of the 2020 Alaska Walk & Bike Conference are now available online.

The conference was held in June and the organizers have now made the videos available to the public here: <https://www.inalaska.net/about>

The organizers also created a certificate of attendance for those who may be able to use it for continuing education purposes. Please note that it is up to the individual to pursue credits for their discipline. You can obtain the certificate by completing the evaluation (link posted under each video).

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

TRAIL MIX, INC.

Sept 26: Today is National Public Lands Day. At Trail Mix, we love public lands, but there's a complicated history that isn't always discussed.

Public lands are often thought of as collectively owned by the American people, although even collective ownership implies a right to the land. But how was that land acquired? Who lived there beforehand? Why could it be claimed?

Long before this land was colonized, it was home to indigenous people, and the violence and forced removal that occurred where we now recreate is the dirty little "secret" of public lands.

So, in recognition of this day, we encourage everyone to not shy away from this history and instead consider how systems of white supremacy and colonization continue today in the outdoors, and what we can do to change it.

One step towards that is to educate ourselves by listening to indigenous peoples' perspectives and experiences, especially in relation to land.

Let's get started together - drop your favorite indigenous organizations and individuals in the comments. We'll kick things off below!

STATEWIDE LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- **ENTER** Alaska State Parks 50th Anniversary Photo Contest (run **monthly**): <https://tinyurl.com/gnssp93>

- Alaska parks system stressed by new pandemic crowds and old funding shortages: <https://tinyurl.com/y3flkij7>
- On Unalaska's trails, listen for Jojo, the hiking cat: <https://tinyurl.com/y32tkpg9>
- Alaska State Parks offers open space to meet COVID-19 challenges: <https://tinyurl.com/yyhkvtz>
- Far East Alaska Range (Luc Mehl trip): <https://tinyurl.com/y68t9sf9>
- 2020-2023 STIP Amendment 1 Open for Comment, **Closes October 23**: <http://notice.alaska.gov/199562>
- Taking the Path Revealed off the Nabesna Road: <https://tinyurl.com/y29kfpyp>
- To put Alaskans back to work, look to a 21st-century Conservation Corps (opinion): <https://tinyurl.com/y2br6mbp>
- Alaska Outdoor Alliance's Lunch and Learn series: www.alaskaoutdooralliance.org/upcoming-events
- Outdoor Explorer radio show/podcast:
 - Huts and parks: <https://tinyurl.com/yy9e7d4w>
 - Alaska's storytellers (Chris Lundgren, Max Romey): <https://tinyurl.com/y5le3mu9>
 - Performing in an emergency: <https://tinyurl.com/y5wjv5ue>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

TRAIL ADVOCATES ORGANIZE TO FIGHT MATANUSKA GRAVEL MINING

Fans of the Matanuska Greenbelt Trail System are protesting a potential proposal by the University of Alaska Fairbanks to extract gravel near the trails. The following story comes from a recent Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation newsletter:



The Matanuska Greenbelt is a central refuge and a popular destination for walkers, bikers, skiers, equestrians, birders, and anglers — to name some of the use types.

Many Mat-Su residents and users of the Matanuska Greenbelt Trail System were distressed about the recent announcement of resource assessment and potential extraction in the heart of the well-loved green space.

Local organizations and active residents have come together for a collective call-to-action to advocate for “preventing irreversible damage to this beloved, heritage farmland and recreational area.”

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation will contribute to advocacy efforts and provide testimonials of the importance and value of protecting our trails, parks, and recreation areas.

View the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation Board of Directors' letter to UAF Board of Regents regarding the proposed resource assessment project on the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center: <https://tinyurl.com/y4xmv7fp>

Why is the Matanuska Greenbelt Trail System such an invaluable asset to the entire Mat-Su?

- The Matanuska Greenbelt is “the largest uninterrupted public space in the core of the Mat-Su

- Valley," and provides over 33 miles of year-round recreation opportunities to a variety of users.
- Comprehensive trail systems are good for our local economy, community health, and property values!
- Access to public trails and parks is more important than ever as our community grapples with the economic, social, and health consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At a time when we are constantly grappling with a “new normal,” our trails and parks have been there to provide opportunities to improve physical and mental health, offer a safe space for families outside the home, and give our community members a much-needed break from the stresses of the digital world and news cycle. Community members, local organizations, and elected representatives must speak up and advocate for ensuring permanent access to the public lands and recreation areas that are essential to our community.

What Can You Do?

- **Contact the Board of Regents!**
- Provide Testimonial About Why the Greenbelt is Important to You!
- Are you a Matanuska Greenbelt Trail User? Take the Matanuska Greenbelt User Survey. The QR code for this survey can be found at trailheads and on the trails around MGT. This survey is not associated with the test drilling for potential gravel extraction on MEFEC property, but your response provides landowners and local organizations with valuable information on the MGT system and how the community utilizes this valuable resource.

*From Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation August & September 2020 Newsletter
Photo from Matanuska Greenbelt Facebook page*

DOWNHILL BIKING TRAILS ADDED AT MAT-SU REC AREA

The following notes about the Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) were included in September emails from the (Mat-Su) Valley Mountain Bikers & Hikers newsletter. To find out more about the group see: <https://vmbah.wildapricot.org/>:

I am absolutely delighted to share an update on our new Monkshood Descender Trails up at GPRA. These trails were funded by the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation and built professionally by Happy Trails, inc. A Student Conservation Association crew built an uptrack alongside Happy Trails and dozens of volunteers picked up their hands and rakes, all ensuring that your mountain biking itches will stay well scratched. These new trails connect upper Monkshood to lower Monkshood with downhill, flow trails that offer an intermediate level ride as well as the opportunity to develop mountain biking skills from a beginner level. The trails will be open in the coming days, so keep an eye on social media and your inbox for that announcement!



May we introduce you to our newest editions? Meet Amanita and Puffball, our two new, one-way, downhill trails that connect upper and lower Monkshood at GPRA. Amanita and Puffball have flowing berms, twists and turns that deliver you right down the mountain and jumps long enough to

roll and substantial enough to launch you into that freeing, air-born state. We have also introduced "Pushki" to the bunch, which is a one-way (for bikes) trail, taking you back up to the top of our new trails so that you can ride them again and again and again and again...

These new trails were funded by the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation and were built by Happy Trails, Inc. VMBaH is looking forward to putting the final touches on the trails next summer. Ride smart and enjoy!

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

Sept 18: We love our partners! Singletrack Advocates (STA) recently received CARES ACT funding that enabled them to begin work early on the Hemlock Burn Trail in the Chugach State Park.

Originally estimated to begin trail groundbreaking in summer of 2021, this multi-use trail from Glen Alps to Prospect Heights is designed for a low-grade, downhill only for bikers and both directions for other users. Details can be found on STA's website.

Stay tuned here on Alaska State Parks FB, IG, and Twitter as well as STA's website for more details. Please check out the details on STA's website prior to asking questions or commenting, we appreciate it!

<http://www.singletrackadvocates.org/hemlock>

Questions prior can be directed to: wendy.sailors@alaska.gov

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

Sept 22: Happy National Voter Registration Day! Anchorage parks, trails, bike lanes and safety infrastructure get built using voter-approved bonds. Your vote matters.

Have you moved recently? Or did you just turn 18? [Register online today!](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/y26zf5xg>

Sept 16: Congratulations to Girdwood Parks and Recreation's trails committee for successfully completing their Challenge Grant project to restore parts of the Lower Iditarod National Historic Trail in Girdwood. They turned a slobby mudhole into a class 4 trail, 6' wide with great footing, sightlines and inclusive of all users. The trail connects the Old and New Girdwood townsites year round.

Many thanks to Rasmuson Foundation for making these challenge grants possible.

Stretching 120 miles from Seward to Girdwood, the Southern Trek of the Iditarod National Historic Trail is slowly getting developed. Very exciting!



SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES

September 18: STA is excited about partnering with CSP to create the Hemlock Burn Trail project! Please visit our website for the project details and the trail plan. We'd like to also thank the Anchorage Assembly for funding this project. This program is supported by the citizens of Anchorage through an appropriation of CARES Act funds by the Anchorage Municipal Assembly. STA looks forward to maintaining the project with our volunteers for years to come.

MAT-SU TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION

Sept 25: We are looking for outdoor recreation enthusiasts, active transportation advocates, backcountry motorheads, health-equity-conscious community members, playground visionaries, and public land users of all types to serve on the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation board!

Our mission is to be the Resource, Inspiration, and Catalyst for Trail and Park Development in the Mat-Su Borough. We seek board members from all parts of the borough and all types of users.

If you would like to learn more about our work, please contact our Board Chair, Kathy Swartz, at kswartz@matsutrails.org. If board service isn't for you, but you know a great candidate, please share this opportunity. Thank you for supporting our work!

MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Sept 22: The remaining Mat Su Borough Trail Crew members are still hard at work. They are currently installing a GeoGrid pathway and pad at the Jay Nolfi Fish Creek Park in Big Lake. The pathway and pad will make the park more accessible to people with mobility impairments. This project is funded by a grant from the Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation.

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- UAF explores gravel resources on Matanuska Greenbelt trails in Palmer: <https://tinyurl.com/yxv46u9x>
- A walk in the park (opinion: addresses Chugach State Park trail user conflicts): <https://tinyurl.com/y2jtabm>
- CARES Act money funds jobs and trails at Anchorage-area parks: <https://tinyurl.com/y3mew5vt>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Perfect Timing on the Petersville Road: <https://tinyurl.com/y4uapooj>
- Bomber Traverse is a spectacular and terrifying way to experience fall in Alaska: <https://tinyurl.com/y62vyd2h>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

ROSIE CREEK FOREST TRAIL PROJECT DELAYED FOR ONE SEASON

An effort to turn forest service roads in the Rosie Creek area of the Tanana Valley State Forest into a more organized trail system is moving ahead, but it has been delayed for a season.

The Division of Forestry received a \$100,000 grant from State Parks' Recreational Trails Program to work on the project. With the grant funds, the division will work on a trailhead, trail signage, and forest service road maintenance.

The work had been planned for this past summer and a trail contractor, Happy Trails, was hired. However, Happy Trails was hired for a last-minute, Anchorage-area, COVID-related job that must be finished by the end of the year. The Rosie Creek grant can be spent over two years. Happy Trails now plans to do the Rosie Creek work next summer.

While the proposal has drawn attention to the recreation potential of the Rosie Creek area, many



people already use the roads and trails informally during winter and summer. However, some have been discouraged from venturing there because of the lack of formal trailheads or directional signs, making it easy to get lost. For people interested in exploring the area on their own, this map can be useful:

<https://tinyurl.com/uuwf75v>

Several winter users have learned about some of the trails by participating in the Tanana River Challenge, a multi-sport winter race. The race uses many of the trails in the Rosie Creek area. To find out more about the race, see: <https://tananariverchallenge.org/>

The planned Rosie Creek trailhead will be at an existing open area off the Parks Highway near its upper intersection with the Old Nenana Highway. Work on the trailhead will include removing junk cars, re-grading the open area, and installation of a map kiosk. Work in the forest roads will include brushing, directional signs, and erosion repair and control.

The motivation behind the project is two-fold. One is that the division has no plans to log in that area for at least several decades. The other is that there is a desire on the Board of Forestry to explore more of the division's recreation mandate.

For questions or to get email updates on the project, please contact Alison Arians at the Division of Forestry at alison.arians@alaska.gov.

This project has got some people talking about the possibility of creating a "long trail" between Fairbanks and Nenana. The idea would be to connect already existing forestry roads with new trail segments. The idea is in the very early stages and it is unclear what other sorts of challenges it might entail, such as purchasing rights-of-way and/or building bridges. You can read more about it in the April 2020 Statewide Trails Investment Strategy here (it is the fifth project): <https://tinyurl.com/ydggsmna>

(Photo of biker on Rosie Creek trails by Eric Troyer)

DAMAGE TO SKYLINE RIDGE PARK SIGNS STARTS DISCUSSION

The vandalizing of signs at Skyline Ridge Park caused interesting and sometimes heated discussion on the Fairbanks Area Hiking Club Facebook page.

Some trails in what is now Skyline Ridge Park were used for years by motorized users. The area was not specifically designated for motorized use, but it was managed passively by the federal and then state government. When the Fairbanks North Star Borough took possession of the land, the trails became non-motorized.

Changes in land use policy often causes problems, especially when there is established historic use. One commenter, who is not happy with the non-motorized designation stated: "I grew up my whole life riding motorized vehicles on that specific trail. It used to be hardly used." Others stated that they liked that the area is designated non-motorized.

The discussion is far too long to post here, and it sometimes devolved into name-calling, but it is a good illustration of the challenges faced by land managers. If you are interested in the discussion see the September 21 post by Sarah McConnell: www.facebook.com/groups/FairbanksHiking/

Photo from FAHC Facebook page by Sarah McConnell



GUIDE SHOWS TRAIL USERS LEGAL TRAILS ON ESTER DOME

Are you wondering what parts of the Equinox Marathon Trail are open for public use on top of Ester Dome? If so, this unofficial "Ester Dome Guide to the Pandemic Equinox Marathon" explains what trails are open

for public use and which are not. The guide was written for the marathon, but it pertains to anyone using the Equinox Marathon Trail route on Ester Dome. Please note that the Alaska Ski Corporation, which owns land over which the traditional Equinox Marathon Trail route runs, does not agree with the "legal access" ruling by the Department of Natural Resources. However, until a higher authority overrules DNR, the DNR ruling stands. See the guide here:

www.interioralaskatrails.org/2020/09/15/ester-dome-guide-to-the-pandemic-equinox-marathon/

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS AREA HIKING CLUB FAN PAGE



Gail Davidson > Fairbanks Area Hiking Club Fan Page

Sept 8: The Mastodon Trail was lovely, damp, and blocked by an interesting assortment of fallen burned trees. Over some, around some, and under some on our knees. The view from the bench at 6 mile was lovely, and somehow going back over, around, and under those trees was a little bit easier. Don't try to bike it.

Sept 1: The Alaska Alpine Club brushed out a new trail. The old trail was blocked by busy beavers. It is where the Richardson Highway heads towards Rainbow ridge and turns to run parallel to the ridge MP 210?. Climbers use it to access a pass to Rainbow Basin but also useful for hiking nice ridges over towards Red Rock Canyon. There is also a cool little lake to visit. It is just a brushed out line through some crazy ground so don't expect a "trail."

BLM-WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

September 9: Before heading out of town for fire assignments a few weeks ago, a crew of BLM Alaska Fire Service smokejumpers spent some days clearing brush from overgrown sections of the Summit Trail. The trail should now be much easier to follow! We thank the smokejumpers for their hard work, and we wish them safe travels as they fight the numerous wildfires currently burning across the West!



FAIRBANKS TRAILS USERS OPEN GROUP

Sept 28: We were having a great mountain bike ride Saturday on the Compeau and Mike Kelly trails out in the Chena River State Recreation Area. We ran across a lot of ATVs, but all our interactions were respectful, and many were quite friendly.



A few miles from the end of the Mike Kelly Trail our great ride came to an end when one of our group, Jenny, fell and broke her shoulder. We had just started self-evacuating when we ran across a couple on ATVs. They immediately helped out, taking Jenny and her bike out to the forestry roads. One of the riders went and got Jenny's car and brought it back to us so we were able to load her and the bikes and head into town.

So, here's a thank you to all those respectful ATVs and ESPECIALLY to the couple who helped evacuate Jenny and her bike!

Sept 24: The Fairbanks North Star Borough has released a Request for Proposals to solicit proposals from qualified businesses in order to complete a Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan.

<https://www.bidnetdirect.com/alaska/fairbanksnorthstarborough>

SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS



Martha Reynolds > Skarland & Pearl Creek Park Trail Users

Sept 28: Many thanks to Pam Groves, who donated this gate to the Pearl Creek Nordic Ski Park. It's at the head of the powerline that goes from Ballaine Road to Pearl Creek School, blocking motorized recreation, but allowing access for maintenance machinery. There is a walking path on the right.

INTERIORWIDE LINKS



Pinnell Mountain Trail damage

- Hunters leave foot trails wrecked and littered with carcasses after expanded caribou hunt: <https://tinyurl.com/y35sseus>
- ATVs Damage Pinnell Mountain Trail: <https://fm.kuac.org/post/atvs-damage-pinnell-mountain-trail>

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES


TRAIL MIX, INC.

Sept 25: Do you want to explore Juneau's trails more? We highly recommend a guidebook  and topographic map  for planning adventures and tracking your progress while you're out there. These two resources work best in tandem by providing a description and visual of the trail.


Laib is holding the Forest Service's Juneau Trails map and Mary Lou King's 90 Plus Short Walks Around Juneau, which are available at local businesses like Foggy Mountain Shop, Nugget Alaskan Outfitter, Rainy Retreat Books, and Hearthside Books & Toys.

Heads up that the Forest Service map is harder to find than Mary Lou King's guidebook (Hearthside did have copies recently), but there are also small maps in her guidebook.



Sept 22: Drum roll please!  So pumped to share the completion of Horse Tram for



#transformationtuesday. Swipe to see these mind blowing  before and afters of 1.36mi of brand spanking new trail.

This project was started way back in 2018 so many hands have worked on it, but we want to send a big congrats to the current crew, the Gravel Geese: Annie, Kim, Sarah, & Mark. You rock!

This trail now extends access from Boy Scout Beach to Amalga Meadow, and we can't wait for you to check it out.

September 11: As you head out on your sun adventures this weekend, a reminder from Edgar and Paola to bring hand sanitizer with you and use it often. Staying clean in the backcountry is always a

priority but especially now during COVID times.

Squeeze out at least a dime-sized amount of hand sani (make sure when you purchase, that it has 60% alcohol or more). Rub your hands together for 20 seconds or longer if your hands are not dry yet. Make sure to get the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

Have fun and be safe out there!

September 8: Today is our first #transformationtuesday post so swipe to see some incredible before and after photos of trail. Sarah and crew put down gravel on Ann Coleman Road Beach Access trail to make for a more pleasant walking experience out of the muck. Go here for an intertidal beach and views of Auke Bay.

September 2: Last week, our trail crews upped their backcountry emergency skills by participating in a wilderness medicine training at Sandy Beach. We practiced building splints and slings, surveying the scene instead of rushing in, and discussing patient history as part of the assessment process. Big thanks to our NOLS instructors, Renee and Steve, who cracked jokes even as we discussed very serious situations. We learned so much from you both that we hope to never use!

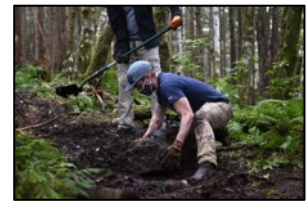
WALK/BIKE ALASKA

Sept 8: Help the Sitka Cycling Club build more single-track mountain bike trails off the Sitka Cross Trail. So far the club has completed three loops, and now we're working on the fourth and fifth trails of the summer.

We're building these trails with volunteer labor and donated supplies, but the trails need some financial support to cover things such as tools, gravel, excavation equipment rental, signage, etc.

You can support this and other projects by [donating to the Sitka Cycling Club](#). You can click this link, <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/SitkaCyclingClub>, to donate through PayPal. The other option is to mail a check to Sitka Cycling Club, c/o Charles Bingham, Treasurer, 405 Marine Street, Apt. No. 6, Sitka, Alaska 99835. Please make checks out to Sitka Cycling Club. You can contact Charles at 623-7660 or charleswbingham3@gmail.com for more details.

Your support is greatly appreciated. For more information about the trails project, go to <http://sitkacycling.wordpress.com>.



JUNEAU PARKS & RECREATION

Sept 24: Ride on over to Cope Park, the new pump track is now open!!! More fencing is still to come, but the track itself is ready to go. Have fun!

Sept 16: Construction is well underway at the Cope Park pump track! SJS Excavation is using gravels excavated from Gold Creek by the CBJ Streets Division to form the base and level the area. Recycled asphalt pavement is being compacted as the riding surface. Parks & Recreation COVID-19 Conservation Corps crews are helping with compaction and grading. The Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance is also volunteering with layout, grades, compaction and fine tuning of the riding surface.

Work is expected to continue through next week. Please stay out of the construction area and do not use the track until the work is completed. Premature use of the track will damage the riding surface and grades. Thank you!



SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Cope Park (Juneau) is getting a new bike track; some neighbors wonder why they didn't know about it: <https://tinyurl.com/y269lzh7>
- Do you ski, sled or ride Montana Creek? The city wants to hear from you (Juneau): <https://tinyurl.com/y3gmk3hv>
- Sitka Cycling Club continues to make progress on fourth new single-track mountain bike trail of the summer: <https://tinyurl.com/y4v2cmr6>
- Outdoors pump track work is ramping up (Juneau Empire): <https://tinyurl.com/y5utc9pg>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

THE 2020 NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS PHOTO CONTEST IS OPEN

American Trails sponsors the annual contest for photographs of designated National Recreation Trails across the country. The annual contest provides awards in several categories and shows off entries (and previous winners) on the NRT website.

The goal is to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails. Contest organizers are looking for good photos of trail users as well as special facilities, art on the trails, management issues, construction, and volunteers. They also want to see entries that cover the many types and uses of National Recreation Trails throughout America.

The deadline for submissions is December 15.

For more information see: <https://tinyurl.com/y6epgn2z>

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

WEBINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- For a listing of upcoming trail webinars workshops, conferences, and other meetings, see the American Trails calendar at: www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": www.americantrails.org/communications/newsletter

VOLUNTEER

- American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh95kp8>
- American Trails Volunteer Portal: www.americantrails.org/volunteer-opportunities
- Conservation Volunteers International Program newsletter (Sept): <https://tinyurl.com/yxeqp2ra>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- How Trails and Outdoor Access Provide Important Mental Health Benefits: <https://tinyurl.com/y49kw3mm>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- How the National Park Foundation Is Highlighting Women's History: <https://tinyurl.com/y66b9w97>

- These women prefer to go it alone on the trails: <https://tinyurl.com/y4x6xt54>
- The Adventure Gap (book): <https://joytripproject.com/the-adventure-gap/>
- Managing Human Waste – Learn How to Protect Resources and Access: <https://tinyurl.com/y6gwk6rt>

The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference the first Tuesday of every other month from 5-7pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us. Members and the public are welcome. Call for more information and meeting details [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049).

A copy of this newsletter will also be posted to our web site. Newsletters come out at the beginning of each month. Deadline for articles is seven days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at fbxtrails@gmail.com