



# NEWSLETTER

NOV  
2021

PO Box 100627; Anchorage, AK 99510-0264

907/334-8049

[www.alaska-trails.org](http://www.alaska-trails.org)

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### REGISTRATION OPEN FOR NOVEMBER LAND MANAGER FORUM

**ATTEND** Registration is open for the Alaska Trails Land Manager Forum.



The forum will be held Monday, November 15. The agenda and a list of speakers has been posted. It will be updated as necessary. We hope you can join us to share lessons from this trail season and begin planning for next year. The event will be virtual this year so you will receive Zoom links after registering.

We are excited to bring land managers, trails groups and trail enthusiasts together to highlight the many successes we have had and share what's worked and what hasn't.

Register and find out more here: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/land-manager-forum>

### SHIRLEY BANKS BRINGS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TO OUR BOARD

We'd like to introduce you to our new board member Shirley Banks.

Shirley was born in Palmer and raised on a homestead in Chugiak. After living in Georgia for several decades, they returned to Alaska to work as a chaplain. Shirley had a career in health education and promotion in a university setting before going to seminary. Their skills include program planning, implementation, and evaluation, training, and group facilitation. Shirley spent all the time she could in the woods as a child in Alaska. Later, summer camp counselors in Georgia and North Carolina taught Shirley skills in hiking, backpacking, paddling, camp craft, and outdoor ethics. In 2006, Shirley started volunteering with American Hiking Society (AHS), which gave them the opportunity to lead trail crews all over the United States. Since then, Shirley has led over twenty trail maintenance Volunteer Vacations for AHS, each a week long. Shirley loves being outside every day in the woods, bogs, and mountains, with a cattle dog mix named Palmer.

Welcome Shirley!



### 'TAKE A HIKE OR WHATEVER YOU LIKE' GARNERS ALMOST \$5,000!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Take a Hike or Whatever You Like fundraiser!

Because of your trail time and donations we raised nearly \$5,000 to help trails in Alaska. We had 39 people participating this time around.

The fundraiser was run from October 1-10. People could Take A Hike—or bike or run or walk—and then make a donation to Alaska Trails. Donors who gave over \$100 were eligible for a prize drawing for REI goodies. We'd like to thank everyone who donated and our sponsors, REI and Chugach Chocolates. Below is a list of people who won REI prizes. If you donated, your yummy chocolate bar will be in the mail soon!

Sharon Z. -- REI Camp Table  
Kristina W. -- REI Camp Chair  
Danielle W. -- REI Backpack  
Pixie S. -- Chugach Chocolates Basket  
Mary G. -- REI Mugs and Blanket  
Nathan P. -- REI Backpack  
Laura M. -- REI Camp Chair



## ALASKA TRAIL SUPPORTERS TELL THEIR STORIES ON FACEBOOK

As part of the Take a Hike or Whatever You Like fundraiser, we asked some of our supporters to take over our social media for a couple of days. They each had two days I believe to tell stories. They told some great stories. There's too much to print in our newsletter, but here's some excerpts to give you a taste.

From Max Romey:



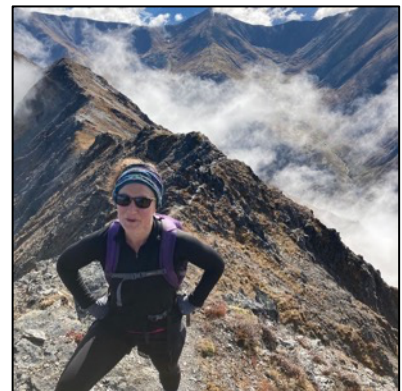
Oct 1: Time for a trail sketch 🎨 My name is @MaxRomey and I am really excited to host the first few days of Take A Hike! I grew up with Dyslexia and really struggled to read and write. This made sharing my passion for the outdoors really difficult until I found painting and filmmaking. This combination led to a career freelance filmmaking that led me all over the world with large running brands. But the more I traveled the less I wanted to leave the unparalleled trails right here at home. With encouragement from my wife, and the amazing Alaskan trail community, I took the

leap to turn my focus toward Alaska and have not looked back since.

From Alli Harvey:

Oct 3: Hi AK Trails! I'm @aharvshow aka Alli Harvey, and I'm excited to guest host here for the next couple days. I'm a writer, artist, NGO/small business consultant, stepparent, and hardcore Scrabble player. I am a podcast junkie and enthusiastically track most things pop culture. My favorite things in life are my Crocs, sandwiches consumed in the wilds, and (you guessed it) the trails that help me access the outdoors and keep me sane/happy.

I consider myself a perpetual beginner when it comes to being outside. I grew up chronically asthmatic and it kept me holed up indoors for most of my childhood, so taking my first steps up mountains as I outgrew my asthma was a Big Deal. I still remember those first hikes as a teenager in the White Mountains in New Hampshire. I was encouraged by the school group I was with, but it didn't make those steps uphill any less grueling. My first nights up in the alpine with the balsam scent back east and cool air got me hooked, though. I loved the idea that, a step at a time, I could climb an entire mountain.



My desire to be outside and on trails eventually brought me to Alaska, where the sheer scale of our mountains dwarfs what I could try to hike in my lifetime. Here, I'm always a beginner - and I appreciate that, because it keeps me humble and grateful for what we have AND for my now-healthy body that allows me to access amazing experiences.

From Haley Johnston:

October 5: Hi internet friends! I'm @haleyoutside, or in the real world, Haley Johnston. I'm staff here at Alaska Trails - currently focused on our Tongass National Forest Sustainable Trails Strategy and our state-wide Alaska Trails Initiative. I'm also a small business owner (@tundratravels), cheddar cheese connoisseur, public lands access advocate, dog-companion, and, of course, huge friggin' fan of trails.



Funny enough I have actually spent tons of time in Alaska's trail-less wild places on personal adventures and as a wilderness guide guiding trips everywhere from the Arctic Refuge to Aniakchak. And while I think that the trail-free expanses of Alaska are central to our culture, way of life and spirit of adventure, I am also deeply appreciative of our amazing trail systems that allow for such a diverse array of activities for every type of trail user. Personally, I enjoy trails by hiking, running, and skiing. Trails are integral to my physical and emotional well-being and I'm guessing they might be important in your life as well!

From Bryant Wright:

Oct 8: Great relationships are forged along trails. 🍷

When I was 16 my older brother convinced me to (reluctantly) spend all my summer wages on a mtn bike. Why? He bought one and needed someone to ride with! We spent several summers on group rides with the Fairbanks Cycle Club, following a bunch of guys on mostly crappy mining trails all over Fairbanks. They kicked our butts, but we were hooked. We'd be lost in the woods still if we didn't keep up with them. Each week's ride was a grand adventure and brotherly bonding. Fast forward a decade and we were building each others' fat bikes for our first Susitna 100. Those shared experiences, ranging from excitement to exhaustion, gave us a lasting taste for long trail events. Connecting all those sections of trails helps us connect as brothers. Thanks bro!



And it's no surprise that some of my best buds are the guys I've spent the most miles on the trail with. My high school and college running buddies know me better than most. My fellow trail connoisseur in the north knows just what kind of tempting trip ideas to suggest to get me to cancel all my other plans.

But lately in life there've been no more special trail partners than my wife and our little girl. When life is busy, flying by, and all the days are running together, I know our trail outings, however short, are the moments I'll be able to remember.

Who do you want to connect with? Because you should call them up and see if they want to hit the trails with you this weekend. 🍷❤️

## SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Oct 28: We celebrated all our hard-working Alaska Trail Stewards volunteers at Turnagain Brewing earlier this month. These ladies achieved Black Hat status by participating in 5+ events. Check out our website for all the ATS end of season stats: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/ats-stats>

**DO SURVEY** Oct 12: Here is an opportunity to express your opinion on a proposed bike path connecting Crescent Creek and Carter Lake. Please consider filling out the Google Survey below. This survey was created by Representative Zack Fields' office. <https://tinyurl.com/e6bxxmm6>

Oct 8: Great night last night to celebrate our wonderful Alaska trail stewards volunteers! We're grateful for all your hard work and look forward to hitting the trails next season.

Big THANKS to Turnagain Brewing for the great outdoor space.  
Alaska Trail Stewards Volunteer Events - 2021 Quick Stats:

- 19 events
- 180 volunteers
- 1275 volunteer hours
- \$36,388 donated labor
- 73,874 feet of trail built or maintained by hand



Oct 5: We spend a lot of time playing in the dirt, but did you know we also work to plan sustainable trails for future generations of Alaskans? A new trail being developed by the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation and Alaska State Parks will connect the K'esugi Ken Campground to the K'esugi Ridge Trail. This new section of trail will also serve as a major connection for one of our most ambitious planning projects yet: the Alaska Long Trail. Extending from Seward to Fairbanks, the Alaska Long Trail is a massive recreational and economic opportunity for Alaska's future.

## ALASKA TRAILS NEEDS YOUR HELP TO PRESERVE, PROMOTE TRAILS

**DONATE** This newsletter is brought to you free by Alaska Trails. Our mission is to enhance the Alaska trail experience by supporting sustainable, world-renowned trails through advocacy and education. We couldn't do this without support from you. **Please donate to help us continue our work:** [www.alaska-trails.org/donate](http://www.alaska-trails.org/donate)

All year long we strive to:

- Promote the health, social and economic benefits of trails by educating users through forums, conferences, information materials, training and other activities.
- Preserve and improve public trail access by assisting public and private organizations in forming coordinated programs, policies, and standards.
- Promote sustainable trail systems for all users by developing and providing technical assistance for trail projects.

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR MOTORIZED RTP GRANTS

**APPLY** You can help improve trails in Alaska! Grant applications are now available for the Recreational Trails Program.

Only applications for Motorized and Safety and Education projects are being accepted this time. The program requires a balance of non-motorized, motorized, and mixed projects. The state is a little out of balance regarding that. However, trails built or maintained under Motorized are almost always open to non-motorized users, too. It's just that the primary intent must be for motorized users. Maximum grant amount for Motorized projects is \$300,000 and requires a 10% match.

Deadlines for this round of RTP grants are as follows:

- November 30, 2021: The mandatory public notices must be posted by this date.
- December 31, 2021: Application due date. All applications must be received electronically or postmarked by this date.

The RTP is the single largest funding source for trails in Alaska. **If you interested in applying, 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 program. 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](mailto:Parks.RTPGrantApp@alaska.gov)



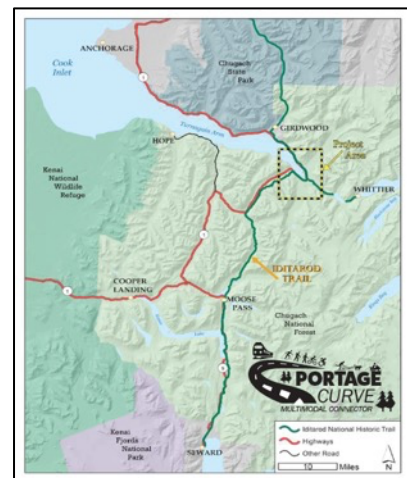
### TRAIL-RELATED PROJECTS ON SEN. MURKOWSKI'S EARMARK LIST

Two projects on Sen. Lisa Murkowski's recently released earmark wishlist include trail projects.

The projects are two among dozens of earmarks on the wishlist that totals \$230 million. See the entire list here (<https://tinyurl.com/2mnpzmsu>). Read more about the issue of earmarks on this Alaska Public Media story (<https://tinyurl.com/cjb4d6s2>).

The two trail-related items in the list are:

- Chugach National Forest: \$5.77 million for maintenance, construction, and restoration on portions of the Iditarod trail.
- Juneau (Seaalaska Heritage Institute): \$500,000 to help support the Kootéeya Deiyi project, a project to create a trail of totem poles and storyboards representing Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian clans along the Juneau waterfront. The project is expected to help increase economic development while highlighting and preserving Native art and culture, consistent with the goals of the NATIVE Act (P.L. 114-221).



## ACT NOW TO SUPPORT THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

**ADVOCATE** Right now, Congress is debating what to prioritize in the future of our nation's infrastructure. Trails are a critical component of infrastructure. The Recreational Trails Program needs your support.

The RTP is the single biggest funder of trails in Alaska. Unfortunately, the program is severely underfunded. **You can help by adding your name to the American Hiking Society sign-on letter.** The AHS is advocating for the whole RTP program, not just non-motorized trails: <https://tinyurl.com/y6fey7ny>

*Mostly from Paperless Trail, an American Hiking Society newsletter*

## AID OFFERED FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO GROW REC ECONOMY

The Environmental Protection Agency Office of Community Revitalization, the USDA Forest Service, and the Northern Border Regional Commission invite communities to apply for Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) planning assistance. Partner communities will work with a planning team to identify strategies to grow their local outdoor recreation economy, strengthen their central business corridors, conserve and sustainably use forests and other natural assets.

Past RERC projects have included improving access to trails and nearby natural attractions, promoting outdoor-oriented businesses, expanding lodging and other services for visitors, supporting economic growth and amenities in downtowns, and ensuring that residents and visitors from all backgrounds can access and benefit from outdoor recreation opportunities.

Application deadline is Nov. 22, 2021. To learn more about the program and to apply, visit the EPA's Smart Growth website: [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities)

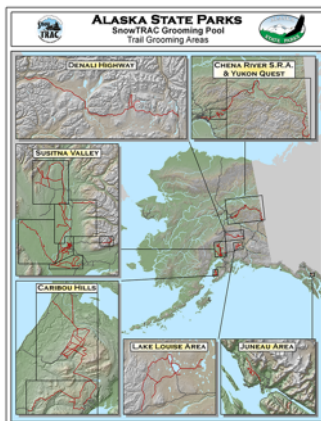
*From Alaska Outdoor Alliance newsletter*

## WINTER TRAIL GROOMING PROGRAMS NEED YOUR HELP

**DONATE/SERVE** Winter is upon us and if there is no snow on the ground in your area, there soon will be.

Many winter trails activities require (or at least are much improved by) grooming, such as snowmachining, skiing, mushing, and fatbiking. If you engage in an activity that is improved by grooming, please remember to support those efforts. There are several ways you can help.

If you use an area that is clearly groomed and has a grooming fund, make sure to donate. Not all trails that are groomed have a specific grooming fund, but you can also join or donate to the group that is doing the grooming. Look for signs that tell you how you can help.

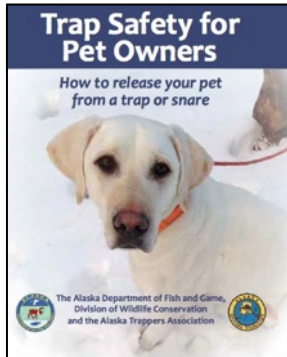


You can also support the Alaska Snowmachine Trails Program, which provides funds for grooming in several areas of the state. The grooming this program provides benefits more than snowmachiners. Anyone who uses the groomed trails benefits, including fatbikers, skiers, mushers, and hikers. You can't donate to the Snowmachine Trails Program, but you can help it by making sure to register your snowmachine, which is what funds the program. You can also serve on the SnowTRAC board, which advises the state administration on how the funds are spent. Finally, you can advocate for the program. In years past, administrations have tried to cut the program as part of budget cutting measures. However, strong advocacy has kept the program alive.

To find out more about the program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>  
Most importantly, get out there and enjoy all the great winter trails we have in Alaska!

## RESOURCES HELP REDUCE PET/TRAPPING CONFLICTS

Trapping season opens November 1, so trail users who let their dogs run loose should make sure they know some basic information about traps and trap lines. A pamphlet and videos are available.



**PAMPHLET:** A pocket-sized pamphlet titled "Trap Safety for Pet Owners" describes the types of traps and snares that may be encountered and provides illustrated instructions on how to free pets swiftly and safely. It is produced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Alaska Trappers Association (ATA). Copies are available free of charge at department offices or may be viewed on the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/m6oulhk>. More information, including video footage featuring trap removal instructions, is found on the department's website at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) (see "Sharing the Trails" under the "Hunting > Trapping" dropdown menu), and on the ATA website ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).

**VIDEO:** The ATA also sells a 30-minute video, "Sharing Alaska's Trails," that includes information such as how to know if you are on a trap line, trap line safety, the physics of handling and opening traps and snares, and tips for first-aid for pets accidentally caught in traps. The video doesn't promote trapping but deals with the practicalities of sharing the trails. A three-minute excerpt of the DVD can be found on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ)). To order a copy of the DVD check the ATA store ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).



Most trapping seasons run from November 1 to the end of February, but the season for a few species lasts longer. Wolf traps could be active well into April.

## OUTDOOR REC TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

**APPLY** The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is seeking multiple candidates to fill two (2) volunteer positions, representing Motorized trail users, for the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB). Applicants should have knowledge, experience, and interest in outdoor recreational activities and grant-funded programs. This is a Commissioner-appointed position with a three-year term, and the board meets a minimum of twice per year.

The primary role of the ORTAB is to assist in evaluating grant proposals for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since 2000, these programs have invested over 30 million dollars in trail projects throughout the state, creating critical and sustainable infrastructure while supporting private sector jobs throughout Alaska. Because ORTAB members carry a wide array of trail and public land user experiences, they are occasionally asked for additional advice on other outdoor recreation related subjects. Additional information regarding the ORTAB can be found at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/ortaboard.htm>.

The last day to submit applications is November 30, 2021. **For more information on applying see:** <http://notice.alaska.gov/203835>

## SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

### FAIRBANKS TRAIL USERS OPEN GROUP

Oct 26: Good advice for any trail users. From the story:

--The incident led the Lake County Search and Rescue to share a lesson for hikers.

"If you're overdue according to your itinerary, and you start getting repeated calls from an unknown number, please answer the phone; it may be a . . . team trying to confirm you're safe!" the department said in a statement.—

A hiker got lost in Colorado, then ignored rescuers' calls because they came from an unknown number: <https://tinyurl.com/3edtw9a9>

October 14: Here's an interesting app being used in Colorado. This would be nice to have in Alaska, though to be really useful would require coordination with the state, feds, and local governments, and probably Native organizations.

"Volunteers can help land managers collect important data on trails, campsites and visitor use through CMC's new RIMS Mobile Application. You can report trail maintenance needs, inventory campsites, track visitor use, and more."

<https://cmc.org/RIMS.aspx>

## AMERICAN TRAILS

Oct 15: Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) has taken over our social media today!

Volunteers can be an effective solution to your most pressing stewardship needs - but only if you know how to use them! Download the free guides in the Stepping Up Stewardship Toolkit to learn how to design impactful volunteer programs from start to finish. Each resource was compiled from Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC)'s nearly 40 years of experience in managing outdoor volunteer projects. Learn more at <https://steppingupstewardship.org/>.



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALASKA

October 6 at 9:02 AM ·

Just Released!

👉 The Bureau of Land Management is making available an Environmental Assessment of a proposed amendment to the East Alaska Resource Management Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact. The amendment could allow a potential land exchange near Thompson Pass. 📍

Read the announcement on our website: 🌐 <http://ow.ly/MZsX50GifUg>

👁️👁️👁️ View the proposed amendment on our NEPA register: <http://ow.ly/sPI150GifUh>.

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- BLM Installs Permafrost Monitoring Stations Along Iditarod Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/zh9hb696>
- Rebuilding the Iditarod: An Unparalleled Recreation Opportunity: <https://tinyurl.com/vh6dt34s>

## SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Partial Denali park road closure in Alaska expected for 2022: <https://tinyurl.com/9crl9hkt>
- There might not be a universal formula for happiness, but for many of us, getting outside helps: <https://tinyurl.com/44aamh9n>
- How to Survive a Fall Through Ice (video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PA-GzpcglA>
- Lost in the Wilderness? Don't Change Your Voicemail: <https://tinyurl.com/h93fpts>
- Outdoor Explorer
  - Lee Hart, Alaska Outdoor Alliance, on economic impact of outdoor activities: <https://tinyurl.com/75nbw7u7>



## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### STUDENT GROUP HELPS IMPROVE TRAILS ACROSS THE MAT-SU

With support from the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) recruited, trained, and led an SCA Team that completed trail work in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough during the summer 2021 trail season.



This project consisted of finishing roughed-in trails, routing in new trails, repairing damage caused by erosion, repairing trail tread, cutting brush along trails, closing social trails, and re-routing sections of trails. The SCA trail crew worked at Settler's Bay Coastal Park, Government Peak Recreation Area, Matanuska River Park, and West Butte Trail. The team was supervised by the Trails Supervisor for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

The work completed by the SCA trail crew this season helps to expand and maintain a quality trails and park system in the Mat-Su; promoting healthy lifestyles, enriching residents' quality of life, and providing economic value through recreation, tourism, and business opportunities.

The work completed by the SCA trail crew this season helps to expand and maintain a quality trails and park system in the Mat-Su; promoting healthy lifestyles, enriching residents' quality of life, and providing economic value through recreation, tourism, and business opportunities.

*From the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation September 2021 Newsletter*

### SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

#### ALASKA STATE PARKS

Oct 8: NEW: Eklutna Lake Video Trail Guide

There's still time for this fall favorite. Eklutna Lake has trails for a variety of trail users and a variety of abilities. We hope you can catch the fall colors and glacial blue waters before the snow...but even winter, this area has so much to offer!

VTG: <https://youtu.be/bW6Lkaa9zfs>

Brochure: <http://ow.ly/FW9Q50GjPwp>



Oct 4: **\*\*CHUGACH Update on access to the Rabbit lakes Trailhead and Sunnyside switchback trail\*\***

Canyon Road is open and construction has ended until spring.

Please be considerate of our neighbors:

❄️ The porta-potty has been pulled out for the season but there is a trash bin located near the gate that will remain through the winter for users to dispose of dog waste.

❄️ The road past the gate will not be maintained and users are advised to utilize one of the maintained trailheads when winter sets in.

❄️ **\*\*Clean up after your pets, do not block the roadway or private driveways, and consider using other facilities if parking is full. Thank you!**



### Sept 30: NEW: Thunderbird Falls Video Trail Guide



This gem can be found just off the Glenn Highway in Chugach SP. We recommend a visit any time of year and in multiple seasons. Catch the fall colors, or see the frozen falls in winter that produce mesmerizing ice sculptures! Quick tip: great date spot, fun with friends, or plan an outing with the whole family!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/424MSZSDzaA>  
Guide and map: <http://ow.ly/KODM50GjPO9>

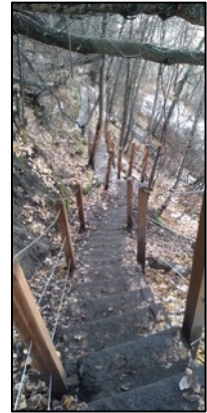
### SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES

**DO SURVEY** October 9: Here is an opportunity to express your support for a proposed bike path connecting Crescent Creek and Carter Lake. Please consider filling out the Google Survey below. This survey was created by Representative Zack Fields' office.

<https://tinyurl.com/4axcz97y>

### MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Oct 22: If you have been up the West Butte Trail lately you probably noticed some additions. This past season we added posts and additional cable railings to the wooden crib steps. This is an effort to keep trail users from going off trail and cutting the corners. People cut the corners or hiking next to the steps erodes the trail, undercuts the wooden steps, and damages the plants clinging to the Butte. This damage will eventually lead to the destruction of the trail and would mean having to re-do the entire trail, at a great monetary cost, or closing one of the most popular hiking trails in the Valley. Our hope is that the additional posts and cables will add many years of life to this wonderful resource so that residents and visitors can continue to see the amazing view from the top! We would like to thank the Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation and the Usabeli Coal Mine for their financial support of this project, as well as the Student Conservation Association for thier work.



### VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKERS AND HIKERS

Oct 26: We are very excited to announce that we have been awarded a grooming grant from the Matsu Borough to offset the cost to our volunteer groomers at GPRA for grooming the single track bike trails for winter fat tire biking! The grant was made possible with money, in part, from the Borough Infrastructure ( Bed Tax) Funds. With this grant, we will also be widening the last of the narrow bridges to make it safer for the groomers.



### SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Hike Rendezvous Peak in Arctic Valley: <https://tinyurl.com/ucsase4a>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Hiking Around Jonah Bay, Prince William Sound: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VloJGy6SP\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VloJGy6SP_c)

### COMMENTS BEING COLLECTED ON FAIRBANKS TRAILS PLAN UPDATE

**COMMENT** Trail users and advocates can add their voice to the update of the Fairbanks Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is in the process of updating the plan, which helps guide borough management and policy about trails within the borough. The borough and its contractor have been working over the spring and summer to collect comments and put together draft maps. Maps of the west side of the borough are ready. Many people have added their comments and the borough collected more comments at one public meeting in late October.

People have more opportunities to comment. Another meeting will be held on Monday, November 22, which will focus on the east side of the borough. Meanwhile, people can comment on the draft maps up on the website or add comments to existing comments.

Go to [www.fnsbtrailsplan.com](http://www.fnsbtrailsplan.com) and follow the process. It can take a bit to figure out how to use the maps, but the process is not onerous. Find the zoom button lower right-hand corner and zoom way out to get a good overall view. Then zoom in again to get a more detailed view. On the left-hand side you can find the comment box, which you can drag-and-drop to the correct place. The website also has more information, including links to the meetings.

A final draft of the Trail Plan is expected to be available in summer of 2022.



### IMPORTANT GOLDSTREAM TRAIL REROUTED AROUND BLOCKAGE

An important trail in the Goldstream Valley has been rerouted around a blockage put up by a landowner.

Last year at this time, there was concern about this when the landowner built a driveway on the trail. Unfortunately, that landowner has blocked the trail. Fortunately, last year an adjacent landowner allowed a reroute on his land and some volunteers stepped up to cut the new trail.

The Tanana Valley Railroad Trail runs along the south side of the Goldstream Valley. It connects Ballaine Road to Sheep Creek Road near Ann's Greenhouse. The blockage of the trail is on the west side of Miller Hill Road. A map of the trail can be viewed on Trailforks: <https://www.trailforks.com/trails/tanana-valley-railroad-trail-west-side/>

The trail is a popular winter trail used by a variety of motorized and non-motorized users. An Interior Alaska Trails blog post from last year explained the situation when the concern was first addressed.



That blog post (written by the editor of this newsletter) has information on the reroute. See the post here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3e7ft3y>

The reroute will be signed, according to one of the people involved in the reroute. No Trespassing signs have been posted along the trail to keep people from hunting on the land, but the new trail is “100% open and free to use.” The reroute signs have been purchased. They are blue with white arrows and are reflective.

This trail blockage highlights an important point about the Fairbanks Borough’s Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan. The plan protects trails ONLY if the land is subdivided. If the land is subdivided, then the landowner is required to grant an easement for the trail. But in cases such as this, where the trail



does not yet have an easement and the land is not subdivided, the landowner does not have to grant an easement.

Landowners can grant easements without subdividing, but they are not required to do so. People or organizations can also purchase easements from landowners.

According to a local trails advocate with intimate knowledge of trail blockage issues, trail advocates can sue for a “prescriptive easement.” Anyone bringing such a suit has to have a vested interest and must have used the trail for 10 years before

2003. (Use can be after 2003 but will then require partnering with the state or borough government, which will make it more difficult.) Winning such a suit is not guaranteed and may be expensive. The state and local governments can also sue for prescriptive easements, however, in this case that is highly unlikely given the political climate in the Fairbanks borough.

More information about prescriptive easements can be found on Wikipedia here:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easement#Easement\\_by\\_prescription](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easement#Easement_by_prescription)

Prescriptive easements are covered under “adverse possession” in Alaska state law (AS 09.45.052). See the “adverse possession” law here:

- <http://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#09.45.052>

*Top photo of blockage for the end of the driveway; bottom photo of the reroute signs before being installed.*

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXPLORING NENANA RIVER AREA TRAILS

**COMMENT** The below announcement is from a “Nenana River Trails” National Park Service website. To see the full announcement and to comment see:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=63380>

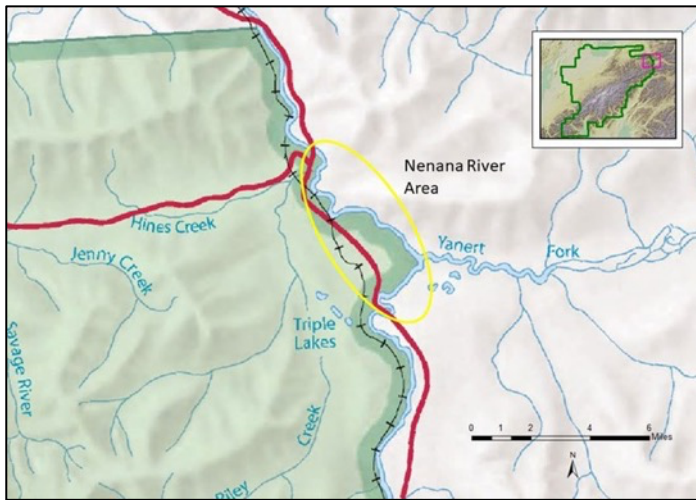
Denali National Park is considering developing trails and related recreational infrastructure in the area of the park between the Nenana River and the Parks Highway (the 'Nenana River corridor'). The National Park Service is in the early stages of exploring ideas for this area and would like to hear your thoughts on how any development in the Nenana River corridor can best serve visitors and conserve park resources.

The initial vision for the Nenana River corridor includes trails and other developments that provide a readily available visitor experience in an incredibly scenic natural area. Some visitors may see the area as an introduction to Denali's backcountry. The area would be less 'managed' or 'tame' than the

entrance area, but not as intimidating as the park's trailless backcountry. Although the area would still be in the frontcountry it would have a remote feel in that the presence of development, traffic, and the busy nature of the entrance area quickly recede as one leaves the trailheads.

At this early stage, preliminary ideas consider the locations of trails and which uses would be allowed on those trails, possible campsites, and winter use of the Nenana River corridor.

Please review the information on this website and provide your thoughts via the 'Open for Comment' button on this



webpage during October 27 - November 24, 2021. Your feedback will be used to further refine the ideas that the NPS pursues in this area.

*Area of consideration circled in yellow on map.*

## PROJECT ADDS RECREATIONAL VALUE TO ROSIE CREEK AREA

The Alaska Division of Forestry has completed significant recreational upgrades to the Tanana Valley State Forest's Rosie Creek forestry road system in a partnership between working forests and recreational use that provides benefits to both, division director Helge Eng said today.

"Alaska is fortunate to have state forests that can both support sustainable timber harvesting and provide unique recreational opportunities," Eng said. "This Rosie Creek project achieves both purposes, offering recreational users the chance to view sustainable forestry in action, and providing for road maintenance, directional signage, trail maps, parking, a downloadable GPS map, and other recreational improvements."



Roads in the Rosie Creek Unit were originally built to access the area for forest management, and the division has used them for timber harvest, reforestation, tree planting, and wildland fire protection. According to Jeremy Douse, northern regional forester, managing forests is especially important due to climate change.

"Forest management, specifically silviculture, is a tool that can be used to help adapt forest conditions to a changing climate," he wrote in an email.

While the roads will continue to be used for their primary use for forest management, and recreational users should remember to yield right of way to forestry vehicles, the improvements will make the road system safer and more attractive for many popular recreational uses.

The division plans to offer a timber sale within the Rosie Creek area this fall, and anticipates a local operator will harvest the timber to build log cabin kits or other value-added products, Eng said.

“We hope this project demonstrates how recreation and forestry interests can find common ground and achieve common goals to deliver long-term benefits to each,” he said.

Mostly from a Alaska Department of Natural Resources press release: <https://tinyurl.com/8s3acnmb>

- The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner also did a story on the project: <https://tinyurl.com/4tuuwjum>
- See the trails on Trailforks: [www.trailforks.com/region/tanana-valley-state-forest-rosie-creek-1617851220/](http://www.trailforks.com/region/tanana-valley-state-forest-rosie-creek-1617851220/)

Geoff Orth photo: New trail entrance to Rosie Creek Forestry Area

## GOLF COURSE CHANGES HANDS, STILL ALLOWS SKI, SKIJORING

The former North Star Golf Course has changed owners and names but it will still be open in winter for skiing and skijoring.

The course was purchased earlier this year by Ray and Stephany Nadon, who changed the name to Midnight Sun. The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association has been grooming winter trails on the golf course for skijoring and skiing. That will be allowed to continue. In fact, the new owners have remodeled the clubhouse so that it can be heated and are planning activities, such as a possible winter ski solstice fundraiser, where proceeds would go toward community needs.

Grooming will start once we have enough snow.

To find out more about the new owners see: <https://www.midnightsungolfak.com/>

## SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

### SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS

October 3 > Stan Justice

I talked to Howie Theis, the owner of the Fairbanks Golf Course. He said he could see ski tracks on green number 6 in the shape of dead grass. Grass greens take a lot of work this far North so please, please please stay off the greens. Our winter use of the golf course depends on it. How to recognize the greens when covered with snow? Staying on the groomed trail is the best way - grooming should start soon. Greens are flat circular areas with rounded hills around them and sand traps.



He also mentioned lots of dog poop so please clean up after your dog. There are plastic bags on the church gate.

The restaurant is nearing completion and Howie hopes to get it open in November. That means we will have access to the parking lot during the hours the business is open. But best to keep using the church gate for now. Workers come and go at odd schedules so you could get locked in.

## DELTA JUNCTION TRAILS ASSOCIATION



Oct 26: For a 2nd time the 1st gate at the park has been torn out. The park is a joint venture between DJTA, the City, & the state. The gate is on City land and was installed to reduce vehicle traffic. The City administrator surveyed the damage and will take other necessary actions. A heavier metal gate is ready for spring placement.

**COMMENT** Oct 19: USAG Alaska is interested in knowing what improvements users would like to see on Army-managed lands. For example, projects under consideration include expanding parking capacity at Manchu Lake and improving the trail and interpretive information at Donnelly Dome. Users are asked to send suggestions for management projects to this email:

[usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.fwa-isportsman@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.fwa-isportsman@army.mil)

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

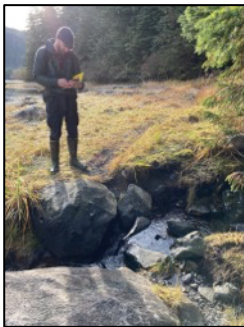
### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Felix Gold mineral lease moves forward, Ester Dome not included (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/khn5x9kf>

## SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

### SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

#### SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.



Oct 20: We took advantage of the weather window this weekend to check out the trail work needs at Sea Lion Cove. Lots to do! Sitka Trail Works is hoping to make some improvements this next season.

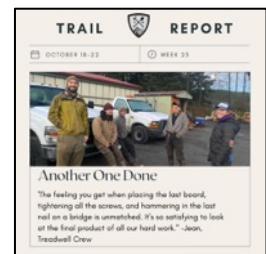
Oct 4: This weekend's storm left a lot of trees along our trails. We appreciate the folks who take it upon themselves to keep the trails open! Sitka is pretty great about taking care of our own.

Let us know if you saw other trees blocking trails! Photos of downed trees are always helpful for preparing maintenance efforts.

#### TRAIL MIX, INC.

Oct 25: Our crews have been working hard and keeping warm in this cold weather. We have some big projects that we're close to wrapping up and we couldn't be more excited to share the final reports with you. Last week, crew members finished construction on the Nielson Creek bridge. This bridge spans 46 feet and is our biggest bridge we've built so far.

Over at the Eagle Valley Center, crew members continue work on the elevated walkway. Railings have been attached to the walkway which means the project is close to completion. This week, we'll be building approaches and adding the last few feet of decking.



Oct 21: Volunteer work on the Christopher Trail continues!



SheJumps joined us last Saturday to help resurface the trail by hauling and spreading gravel. They made a big impact in only a few hours and just as importantly, were a fun crew to hang with. Thanks so much for coming out!

The season is winding down quickly, but if you are part of a group that would like to volunteer, we can still use your help this month. Go to [www.trailmixinc.org/give/volunteer/](http://www.trailmixinc.org/give/volunteer/) and let us know.

Oct 19: We are bear-y 🐻 pleased to share today's #transformationtuesday from Kootznoowoo or Admiralty Island.

Earlier this season, one of our crews traveled to the popular Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area to replace the access bridge to its observation tower. The island is home to an estimated 1500 brown bears, so we worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service - Tongass National Forest to minimize the project's impacts to the bears as well as keep our team safe.

Kootznoowoo, which means the "Fortress of the Bears," was named by the Tlingit people for its large brown bear population. It also has the highest concentration of bald eagles in the world and provides habitat for Sitka black-tail deer, mink, marten, otters, and other birds.

This is a very special place, and we are proud to have been able to complete this upgrade so that visitors can continue to enjoy wildlife viewing for years to come.

Thank you to Dane, Julio, Jean, and Jessie (with help from Duncan) for making this happen. Not only did they camp out for over a week, they contended with an onslaught of bugs and periods of heavy rain that almost guaranteed they never had dry clothes. Thank you for your dedication!



Oct 12: Last week, we took advantage of the sunny weather window to fly in 45 gravel bags to Treadwell Ditch for tread improvements, and through the power and depth of our Trail Maintenance Volunteer Team, about 25 of those bags have already been emptied. That's enough gravel to fill one and a half dump trucks!

Each bag weighs about 1700lbs so that's no small task. The gravel is transferred one shovelful at a time to wheelbarrows where it's carried to the appropriate spot on the trail. It's then spread with rakes and packed down with tampers.

Over the course of the season, this volunteer team has improved over 1.5 miles of trail on Treadwell Ditch, and once they empty out the remaining gravel bags, that total will be around 2 miles. A big thank you to our volunteers for all your hard work!

REPORT Oct 7: After last weekend's storm we've been hearing quite a few reports of downed trees over trails and landslides. To help us take care of Juneau's trails we need some help from you! Next time you're out hiking and see damage to the trail, snap a picture and make note of how far you are. **When you get home, fill out the Juneau Trail's Damage Report.** These reports enable us to quickly address damage to our trail system. You can find the link on our website under "Contact Us" or go to [bit.ly/juneautrailsreport](http://bit.ly/juneautrailsreport).





## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### BIPARTISAN OUTDOORS FOR ALL ACT REINTRODUCED

**ADVOCATE** Congress re-introduced the bipartisan Outdoors for All Act (H.R. 5413/S.2887) sponsored by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) Rep. Barragán (D-CA-44) and Rep. Turner (R-OH-10). The Outdoors for All Act creates a dedicated source of funding for local parks, trails, and greenspace, targeting the urban communities that need it the most. Add your support for the Outdoors for All Act by asking your Members of Congress to co-sponsor the bill.

Add your name to this [sign-on letter](#) by the American Hiking Society:

<https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/take-action-outdoors-for-all-act/>

*From Paperless Trail, an American Hiking Society newsletter*

### STUDENTS SHOULD CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

**VOLUNTEER** American Hiking Society's 2022 Alternative Breaks are now open for registration! Alternative Breaks are volunteer trail stewardship projects in America's parks and forests designed specifically for college student groups and young professional groups. Part volunteer work project, part kick-back outdoor vacation. Spend your spring break doing something that makes a lasting difference! Secure your Alternative Break today by visiting our website and selecting from exciting locations in Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Illinois and Washington State!

Find out more here: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/alternative-break/>

*From Paperless Trail, an American Hiking Society newsletter*

### 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/training/calendar](http://www.americantrails.org/training/calendar)

#### TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": [www.americantrails.org/newsletter](http://www.americantrails.org/newsletter)

#### VOLUNTEER

- ConservationVIP Community News (Oct): <https://tinyurl.com/3yj69yxi>

#### FUNDING

- IMBA Dig In Program (**November application period**): <https://www.imba.com/digin>
- National Forest Foundation awards (**deadline Jan 13**): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OHVs, **next deadline Dec 15**): <https://yamahaoai.com/>

#### STUDIES

- Time Spent Outside Reduces Stress: <https://tinyurl.com/4xmh7np>

#### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Inn-to-Inn Hiking Is Becoming More Popular in the U.S.: <https://tinyurl.com/akmp5ncn>
- Trail Etiquette Tips from an Old Burnout: <https://tinyurl.com/22zxp2s8>

- Crowd-sourcing data to understand the human impact on recreational areas: <https://tinyurl.com/yvff7fuy>
- Trail User Survey Library: [www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-user-survey-library](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-user-survey-library)
- The Trail Fund Announces \$50,000 Collaboration with Ford Motor Company: <https://tinyurl.com/7m8md2>

---

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](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com)