



# NEWSLETTER

Feb  
2020

PO Box 100627; Anchorage, AK 99510-0264

907/334-8049

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

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### TRAIL TALES EVENT TO SUPPORT ALASKA TRAILS, BIKE ANCHORAGE

**ATTEND** Alaska Trails is excited to present another installment of the Trail Tales storytelling series on **February 6!** Our community partner for Trail Tales #18 is Bike Anchorage, as part of Winter Bike Month.

In the spirit of Arctic Entries, storytellers will share seven-minute stories about their trail



experiences, adventures and life in general. Come enjoy this fun event and support Alaska Trails and Bike Anchorage.

We're back at 49th State Brewing Company in Anchorage for this round of Trail Tales. Doors open at 6:30, stories start at 7:00 pm. Pizza by the slice and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the evening. Tickets are \$15 and can be bought online at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trailtales.html>

One of our storytellers will be Ben Schneider. Ben is a local PE teacher, father, husband, dabbler in everything, but master of nothing. His tale, entitled Freak out, is a story

of fatherhood, frustration and four-letter words.

We'll be featuring other storytellers on our Facebook Event page so look for them over the coming weeks: <https://www.facebook.com/events/433544147551485/>

*(Photo courtesy of Ben Schneider)*

### USE "PICK. CLICK. GIVE." TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS

**DONATE** Alaska Trails is included in the Permanent Fund Dividend's "Pick. Click. Give" charitable contributions program. It's a secure and easy way to make a donation. When you file for your PFD online, you will be given an opportunity to donate using money from your PFD. If you do, please remember Alaska Trails.



Last year, PickClickGive donations helped us complete over 30 volunteer projects - building, maintaining, and improving trails around the state. If you love getting out on Alaska's trails like we do, please support Alaska Trails with a donation from your PFD

If you use "Pick. Click. Give" you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it's you making the gift.

For more information on "Pick. Click. Give" (<http://www.pickclickgive.org>). To go directly to the Alaska Trails "Pick. Click. Give." page <http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails>

## PUT THE STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference will be held **April 23-25**.

Alaska Trails' annual conference provides trail users and the wider public a statewide opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals. Government agencies, trail builders and non-profits will be able to share what they have learned and engage in conversations with others to share best practices and new ideas. There are many ways to enjoy Alaska's trails and the conference brings them together all under one roof. Trails and outdoor recreation are a public health asset and an economic engine for the state and the trails conference seeks to raise the profile of trails and their importance to Alaska.



Some highlights from this year's conference include:

- Alaska Trails Initiative on Friday
- Active Transportation Track on Friday
- Mountain Bike focus on Saturday

For more information see our Facebook Event page at: <https://tinyurl.com/tybe22j>

BIG thanks to ConocoPhillips Alaska for their generous sponsorship of our Trails Conference! Their annual support means a lot to this gathering. If your business is interested in a sponsorship, please contact us at: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)

*(Photo of "Physics for Trail Builders" session from the 2016 Statewide Trails Conference)*

## FOUR EASY WAYS TO HELP FUND ALASKA TRAILS

**SHOP** 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 is shown and you can choose Alaska Trails from the list.



## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR PITTMAN-ROBERTSON GRANTS

**APPLY** The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the Hunter Access Grant Program. Program funds utilize Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson) funds, which are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a pass-through grant to the DWC.

Program funds are used to improve opportunity and access to Alaska's public lands for hunters, trappers, and other recreational users. Eligible applicants include public and non-profit organizations who are eligible to do business with the federal government and must be able to provide the required 25% non-federal match. If selected for award, the Hunter Access Grant Program will reimburse 75% of total eligible costs.

In 2020, the DWC anticipates that approximately \$1.5 million in federal funds will be available. Proposals with a federal budget exceeding \$30,000 are preferred, though those with smaller budgets may still be considered for funding on a case-by-case basis. Future funding availability may vary from year to year depending on the federal appropriation and State of Alaska legislative authorization.

Proposals must develop or enhance public access to wildlife resources for hunting, trapping, and other recreation to be considered for funding. All proposals will be evaluated, ranked, and scored using established criteria that can be found on the Hunter Access Grant Program website along with the application package, FAQ's, and more at: <https://tinyurl.com/wqtzxhk>

The deadline for proposal submission is **4:30 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time on Monday, April 20, 2020**. Background information and more about the Hunter Access Program can be found online at [www.hunteraccess.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.hunteraccess.adfg.alaska.gov).

*(From Alaska Department of Fish and Game press release)*

### SAFE ROUTES PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES PHOTO CONTEST

**ENTER** Do you or your family and friends walk and roll in rain, shine, sun, and snow? Show us how you get around when the weather is gloomy, gray, gusty, or just great! The Safe Routes Partnership invites you to submit your photo to the Safe Routes in All Weather photo contest.

Prizes will be awarded to three winners. In each category, one winner will receive a \$50 gift card. See more information about the categories and criteria below.

All photos submitted to the Safe Routes in All Weather photo contest will be made publicly available in a shared online photo album with photo attribution, so you and your organization can use and feature them to promote Safe Routes all year round. All photo entries must include signed waivers for each individual who appears in the photo.

The deadline to submit photos is **February 28**. See more information here: <https://tinyurl.com/vnfhwh7>



## STATEWIDE LINKS

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### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- **ENTER** Alaska State Parks 50th Anniversary Photo Contest (run **monthly**): <https://tinyurl.com/qnssp93>
- “Active mass movements” are increasing along the Denali Park road: <https://tinyurl.com/utcuubx>
- Alaska raises fees for parks, boat launches and some public-use cabins: <https://tinyurl.com/vdxgho9>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### SEEN RECENTLY ON THE SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

#### ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

**APPLY** January 16: We are now hiring for two full-time staff positions! Follow the link to learn more: <https://bit.ly/2TvLaVy>

The Business Manager ideal for someone with nonprofit fund management experience who likes to wear many hats and keep the lifeblood of a small organization flowing.

The Communications Manager is ideal for a skilled storyteller with passion Anchorage's great outdoors.

**APPLY** January 14: The Youth Employment in Parks 2020 summer jobs are now open!

YEP is a ten-week summer program that hires local youth to work on trail building and park improvement projects. Make lifelong friends, build your resume, and have an enjoyable paying job working outside on Anchorage parkland!

View the job descriptions here:

YEP Crew Member (closes 3/8): <https://tinyurl.com/u5hni3d>

YEP Senior Crew Member (closes 3/8): <https://tinyurl.com/wr9smj5>

YEP Crew Leader (closes 2/23): <https://tinyurl.com/tr5lzzo>



#### SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES

January 5: ASDRA (dog sledding group) has begun grooming their trails. This is a reminder that all we bikers need to stay off their trails and use caution when crossing them. Dog teams have the right of way. Intersections are marked with caution signs.

#### ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

January 21: After a fresh coating of snow, here's a fresh reminder: you can check the grooming status for Anchorage trails before heading out to ski! ❄️

Find the map at this link: [https://maps.ancgis.com/AGOL\\_NordicTrails](https://maps.ancgis.com/AGOL_NordicTrails)

**VOLUNTEER** January 10: The Ski Outreach Program works with local schools to give students the opportunity to learn how to cross country ski. Parks and Rec provides the equipment and instruction, and students provide the enthusiasm and fun!

Volunteers are important part of this program, and we are looking for a few experienced cross country skiers who would like to share their love of skiing with kids. Volunteer times are from 12-3pm on a variety of dates in late January and early February at Russian Jack Springs Park.

Sign up online at: <http://bit.ly/3a7X9hU>

Questions? Email Kelly at [kelly.willett@anchorageak.gov](mailto:kelly.willett@anchorageak.gov) for more info.



## VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKERS AND HIKERS

**DONATE** January 21: Our grooming fund covers fuel and equipment upkeep. As many of you know, our grooming is done by volunteers who donate their time, the use of their personal equipment, and--up until this year--they've also taken on all of the associated costs.

Help support bike trail grooming by donating today: <https://www.facebook.com/ValMtnBikersHikers/>

And be sure to thank them if you see them on the trail!

## TSALTESHI TRAILS (Soldotna)

January 25: Looking to mix things up? There are a couple of areas in Sterling with multi-use groomed trails for skiing, snowshoeing, running and walking. Dog friendly, too.

1. Big Foots Run is a 6-mile loop off the north side of Panoramic Drive.
2. Morgan's Landing State Recreation Area on Lou Morgan Road is groomed for skate skiing and has classic tracks set. Nice, flat and sunny. (Warning for people with dogs: There is an active trap line downriver from the state park.)

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- **COMMENT** (Mat-Su) Jonesville Public Use Area Management Plan Committee will host public scoping meetings in **February and March**: <https://tinyurl.com/rbfyssh>
- Palmer Hay Flats Exploration Day (**Feb 22**): [www.facebook.com/events/619915035479293/](http://www.facebook.com/events/619915035479293/)

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Anchorage Assembly moves on from rushed Project '20s sales tax proposal (trails were included): <https://tinyurl.com/szfigfv>
- Snowmachiners barred from some public lands (Kenai Peninsula, Girdwood areas): <https://tinyurl.com/ygdenevu>
- Refuge Announces Partial Opening To Snowmachine Use (Kenai Peninsula): <https://tinyurl.com/yh57j8mv>
- Valdez has gained a new public recreation area: <https://tinyurl.com/ty8oezg>
- As Anchorage warms, wintertime is defined by ice as much as snow: <https://tinyurl.com/tw6stzx>
- Anchorage's Campbell Lake, long closed to the public, begins to open up: <https://tinyurl.com/u7zanca>
- REI Anchorage classes and events: <https://tinyurl.com/yxz7x26k>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### BOARD TO HEAR APPEAL OF VARIANCE AFFECTING ADMA TRAILS

**COMMENT** The public will again have a chance to comment on a request for a variance from dedicated trail easements involving portions of some Alaska Dog Musher's Association trails.

The variance was denied in December by the Fairbanks North Star Borough Platting Board. An appeal of that decision is scheduled for the February 11 FNSB Planning Commission agenda. The commission is the appeal body for Platting Board decisions. The public can comment on the trails portion of the appeal (which also involves a land subdivision request.) According to Kristen Walker of the FNSB Community Planning Department:

*For trail dedications, members of the public are allowed to submit written or oral comments on the appeal of the variance. Public comment is limited to the topic of dedicating these trails, and not the rest of the subdivision application. The Planning Commission will hold a public testimony period during consideration of this appeal, separate from "citizen comments" at the beginning of the agenda. The public are given 3 minutes each for verbal testimony on a case, excluding any questions from the Planning Commission. Written comments will be considered by the Planning Commission during this appeal, but written comments should be submitted no later than noon on the day of the hearing to ensure that they are received by the Planning Commission. Affidavits are not required.*

Emails can be submitted at [fnsbpc@fnsb.us](mailto:fnsbpc@fnsb.us).

Local trail advocates disagree on whether the variance should be approved. Those who oppose the variance believe it would unnecessarily put the trails at risk and would have set a bad precedence for trails involved in future subdivisions. Those supporting the variance believe it would have ultimately protected the trails involved as well as large chunks of land from development. The issue is highly complicated and was outlined in this Interior Alaska Trails blog post from mid-December: <https://tinyurl.com/r29c5vx>. Another blog post is planned soon. (The editor of this newsletter is also the writer of the blog post.)

The platting board's decision to deny can be found here (<https://tinyurl.com/r37sz7s>).

### BORO TRAILS COMMISSION SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR VACANCIES

**APPLY** The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department is seeking applicants to fill four vacancies on the Trails Advisory Commission. The commission is still looking for representation from North Pole and Salcha and currently lacks any dedicated snowmachine riders. However, it's more important that commissioners have a general interest in trails and trail access than in one specific activity. Anyone who would be willing to serve or would like to know more should contact Bryant Wright, FNSB Trails Coordinator ([BWright@fnsb.us](mailto:BWright@fnsb.us); 907/459-7401)

### SEEN RECENTLY ON THE INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

December 27: Each year brings new beginnings and we are excited to share with you the first Activity Guide of 2020. Whether you're looking for ways to spend time with your family and friends, or you're trying to stay active over the winter months, this guide has what you're looking for!

Use this link to view and download: <https://tinyurl.com/wah6smr>

December 31: Good news for Trails Challengers! The Colorado Creek Trails Challenge sign is installed! The trail guys took advantage of yesterday's warm weather and placed the Colorado Creek sign along the trail. They even ran into one of the friendly Alaska State Parks rangers on a trip to stock the Colorado Creek cabin. Thanks to State Parks for the great trails and all you do in the Chena River State Rec Area!

Park at the trailhead at MP 31.6 Chena Hot Springs Road. Look for the Trails Challenge sign in the first two miles of the Colorado Creek trail. We think you can find this one without having to cross any major overflow. But if you're going further, be prepared for a bit of ice and/or slush!



## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Interior Alaska Land Trust works to expand Fairbanks-area greenbelts: <https://tinyurl.com/wsfqc52>
- Connecting Fairbanks trail user groups: <https://tinyurl.com/u2lc2du>
- Video: KC Deane Mines For Hidden Gems in Fairbanks, Alaska: <https://tinyurl.com/rcog5np>
- The Fairbanks North Star Borough Trails Challenge is happening!
  - Trails Challenge page at <https://tinyurl.com/wgwlza>
  - Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/463758124331854/>
  - List of trails and directions to trailheads: <https://tinyurl.com/yx7r3zbb>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Special Land Use Permit: UAF Greenhouse Gas Study Boardwalk in Goldstream Public Use Area: <https://tinyurl.com/wea3qeb>
- Fairbanks REI classes and events: <https://www.rei.com/events/p/us-ak-fairbanks>
- Outdoor Adventures OLLI Class (for those at least 50) starts in March: <https://tinyurl.com/umchkmr>
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Winter 2020 Activity Guide: <https://tinyurl.com/rhn4vv9>

## SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

### SEEN RECENTLY ON THE SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

#### SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

January 27: We have updated our trail guide for Salmon Lake Trail with 2019 photography & descriptions.

Salmon Lake is a popular boat-accessible trail starting from Silver Bay. The area is frequented by hikers, campers, and sport & subsistence fishing users. The Salmon Lake Cabin is 1.75 miles up the trail & can be rented for overnight visits from the US Forest Service at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)

To learn more about this trail visit: <http://sitkatrailworks.org/salmonredoubt-lakes/>

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION in Sitka:

January 16: Many people in this rugged community are drawn to stewardship of the land, air, and sea. Here Tina Bachmeier (left) and Eleyna Rose hike on Sitka, Alaska's Cross Trail. When construction began in the late 1990s, the project employed loggers displaced after the area's pulp mill closed.

Today, this multipurpose pathway skirts the mountains—linking to other trails, neighborhoods, and downtown Sitka. “We’ve got trails in this town for every type of individual and health need,” says

Lynne Brandon, executive director of Sitka Trail Works, Inc., the nonprofit that works with the city, state, National Park Service, Coast Guard, and Sitka Tribe of Alaska to develop a robust network of trails.



## SOUTHEAST LINK

- Juneau may be getting its first official bike park: <https://tinyurl.com/wx4yq87>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### CHANGE PROPOSED TO SHORTEN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS

**COMMENT** Earlier this month the Council on Environmental Quality issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking -Update to the Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - <https://tinyurl.com/tn9lsyv> . This proposed rulemaking is intended to “...revise and modernize... NEPA regulations to facilitate more efficient, effective, and timely NEPA reviews by Federal agencies.”

As many in the off-highway vehicle (OHV) community are aware, NEPA reviews can often be time consuming endeavors which can produce reports hundreds of pages in length. The proposed changes are intended to “...advance the original goals of the CEQ regulations to reduce paperwork and delays, and promote better decisions consistent with the national environmental policy...”

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council encourages everyone in the OHV community to take a look at the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and submit comments to encourage a reduction in paperwork and reporting required under NEPA while still ensuring that resources remain adequately protected.

Comments are due **March 10, 2020**.

*From National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council email*

## 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](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)

*TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS*

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



## **VOLUNTEER**

- American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh95kp8>
- American Trails Volunteer Portal: [www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer](http://www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer)

## **FUNDING**

Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. grants (ATV trail projects; due March 1, Sept 1): <http://tinyurl.com/zcz8u7a>

## **TRAIL GUIDES**

- 7 best hikes from 2019 in Colorado Springs and beyond: <https://tinyurl.com/yjickpb3>
- The 25 Best Accessible Trails in America: <https://tinyurl.com/rzjm7mr>
- The 5 LA Trails You Should Resolve to Hike in 2020: <https://tinyurl.com/roj8ch3>

## **STUDIES**

- Latest in Health: step off the treadmill, hike into the great outdoors: <https://tinyurl.com/tmwr66s>
- Two Studies Highlight Trails' Economy, Environment & Health Benefits: <https://tinyurl.com/uhoez7w>

## **TRAILS AND ECONOMICS**

- Recreational trails are seen as an economic boon: <https://tinyurl.com/wrk59sl>
- Outdoor Recreation Spurs Local Economic Growth, But...: <https://tinyurl.com/ydtuz7ue>
- Ten Examples That Show Trail Tourism Works: <https://tinyurl.com/ws5rzhf>

## **OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:**

- I Picked Up 80 Pounds of Trail Trash in 2019. Here's What I Learned: <https://tinyurl.com/tquybcy>
- Sustainable vs. Social Trails: Take the Road Most Traveled: <https://tinyurl.com/sgp457p>

## **INTERNATIONAL LINKS:**

- 4 equestrian travel destination ideas for 2020: <https://tinyurl.com/ukqyzxf>

## **SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL**

- Wayfinding: Science, Mystery of How Humans Navigate (book review): <https://tinyurl.com/ye6bjn9r>

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The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference on the first Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00 pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us for an hour. 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 five days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at [fbxtrails@gmail.com](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com)