



# NEWSLETTER

May  
2020

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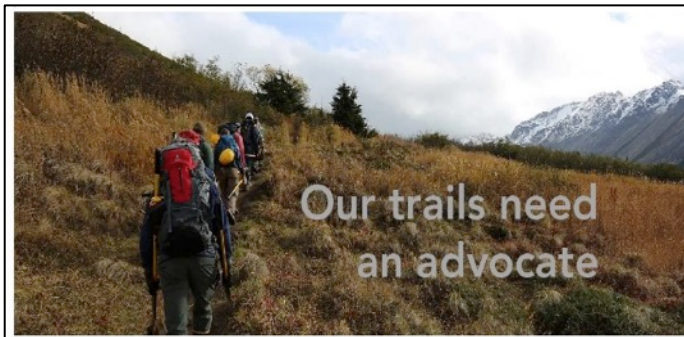
[www.alaska-trails.org](http://www.alaska-trails.org)

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE SUCCEEDS IN VIRTUAL FORMAT

While we were disappointed that the 2020 Alaska Statewide Trails Conference could not be conducted in person, Alaska Trails seized the opportunity to stage a successful virtual conference.

By hosting a series of webinars on Thursday, April 23, and Friday, April 24, Alaska Trails brought a wide variety of trail topics to an audience spread across the state. We even were able to feature many presenters from outside the state. The webinars included programs on topics such as healing trails, the Alaska Trails Initiative, funding, and the US Forest Service Saw Program. Trail managers and advocates



from across the state were able to log in, listen and ask questions about many aspects of the trails world.

We hope to see you in person at the next one, but in the meantime, please see the link below to view (or review) the webinars from this year.

Alaska Trails would like to extend a special thank you to presenters who took the time to share their knowledge and expertise.

And a special Thank You! to our conference sponsors: ConocoPhillips Alaska, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, and Friends of State Parks, Mat-Su.

The recorded video presentations as well as the PowerPoints to go with them can be found at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/2020-conference-sessions>

### STAYING SAFE ON THE TRAILS AND OUTDOORS AMID THE PANDEMIC

Some things have changed since our last newsletter in regard to the coronavirus pandemic; however, the basic advice has stayed the same. Keep at least 6 feet apart from others (though farther when exercising), wear a mask when appropriate, and use proper hygiene.

What has changed in regard to trails are aspects outlined in Gov. Mike Dunleavy's "COVID-19 Health Mandate 17." Attachment M of the order allows intrastate travel and outdoor day recreation, Attachment L states that cabins, tent sites, and campgrounds are again open, and Attachment K allows outdoor classes and activities at gyms and fitness centers. However, all of these come with restrictions including but not limited to groups not to exceed 20 in size, non-household members cannot travel in a vehicle together, and people in groups with non-household members must use masks and stay at least 6 feet apart.

You can read the mandate and all the attachments at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9yec5lv>

Doing things with others on trails is allowed, but Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska chief medical officer, has several recommendations:

- You should not carpool with non-household members.
- At trailheads if others are there, wear a buff, balaclava or other face covering. Double it, if it's thin. The COVID-19 virus can be transmitted through water droplets in our breath. A face covering collects much of that water vapor.
- Even with the face covering, stay 6 feet away from others. Our breath tends to disperse more outdoors, but a breeze can also blow our breath toward others.
- Avoid using restrooms. If you can't wait, assume that the surfaces are infected with the virus and act accordingly: use hand sanitizer or wash your hands as soon as you can after using public facilities.
- While moving, such as running or biking, you don't have to wear a face covering, but keep at least 20 feet away from any exercise partners who are not a part of your household. If you do stop, make sure you're at least 6 feet apart, and at least 10 feet apart if you are breathing heavily.
- When passing others wear a face covering to avoid spewing out your potentially infected water vapor. If you don't want to have your face covered constantly, where a buff or neck gaiter that you can quickly pull up when you are about to pass someone else.

## INVESTMENT STRATEGY AIMS TO FOCUS TRAIL EFFORTS STATEWIDE

In collaboration with many other organizations, Alaska Trails recently released the Statewide Trails Investment Strategy. The Strategy is being developed as a way to build on and expand trail infrastructure in Alaska. It was recently unveiled at a presentation during the online Statewide Trails Conference.

The Statewide Trails Investment Strategy aims to help focus and facilitate trail efforts already taking place at many different Alaskan communities. In addition, the Strategy is meant to encourage even more efforts across the state to expand the trail infrastructure and improve the resources we already have.

Besides trail organizations, the Strategy includes organizations and people from government, business, the health industry, the visitor industry, and other groups that have complementary goals.

The Strategy recognizes that trails bring a wide variety of benefits to our state, especially by providing resources for visitor industry businesses and an outlet for outdoor recreation sports. Already, more than 10 percent of the Alaskan workforce is tied to the tourism and outdoor recreation industries. The Strategy emphasizes that smart investments can help grow this dynamic sector of our economy, which will become even more important as other sectors wane. But the Strategy also recognizes that intelligent planning is required to grow trail infrastructure while maintaining the quality of our communities and natural places.

The Strategy also appreciates that trails provide other benefits for Alaska, including a place for healthy exercise and a quality of life that is uniquely Alaskan and helps draw high-quality workers to the

**POTENTIAL FOR ROBUST OUTDOOR ECONOMY IN ALASKA**

People and communities across Alaska recognize that outdoor recreation supports health, contributes to a high quality of life and—perhaps most importantly—drives spending that supports business, creates jobs and generates tax revenue that pays for schools and other public services. Investing in outdoor infrastructure attracts employees, residents, retirees, and skilled workforce, ensuring those communities thrive economically and socially. More than one job in ten in Alaska is tied to tourism and outdoor recreation spending. Smart investments could further grow this dynamic sector; good planning can make sure we grow while maintaining the quality of our natural settings and communities.

These numbers and the data in the sidebar showcase the important role outdoor recreation plays in the Alaskan economy and hint at the potential for even larger growth. Most of the outdoor recreation-related spending and job creation takes place in the summer months between May and September. However, Alaska has great potential to develop winter recreation options. Improvements to access and usability of winter trails, for snowmachines, fat tire biking and skiing, can turn Alaska into a stronger four-season destination.

**FAST FACTS**

- \$412 BILLION**  
Outdoor recreation is the "Sleeping Giant of the US Economy," providing 2.2% of the total US GDP, larger than fishing, farming, forestry, utilities, or telecommunications.<sup>1</sup>
- \$3.2 BILLION**  
Annual in-state spending tied to AK's outdoor industry.<sup>2</sup>
- DEMAND FOR NATURE WALKS & HIKING**  
The fastest growing activity for both air and cruise out-of-state Alaska visitors 2011-2016.<sup>3</sup>
- + \$137 MILLION/YEAR**  
Extra spending if even just half of visitors added "ONE MORE DAY" (OMD) to their AK trip.<sup>4</sup>
- TRAIL USERS SPEND MORE, STAY LONGER**  
International tourists to New Zealand who participate in walking and hiking spend \$3600/trip vs. \$2800 spent by all holiday visitors. The average stay in New Zealand is 19 days; in Alaska 9 days.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

AT LEFT: Alaska is a great place to be in the winter, be it on your snow machine (Source: AKAA) or biking on the trails at Campbell Trail (Source: Bob Wink, BLM)

Alaska Trails Initiative Work in Progress DRAFT April 2020 page 3

state. Trails also complement other efforts, such as the forestry industry and efforts to preserve greenspace.

To find out more about the Strategy, including a draft of the 2020 Statewide Trails Investment Strategy document see: [www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative](http://www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative)

## SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

**TREAD LIGHTLY** Alaska Trails asks that you please keep in mind how your trail activities might affect other trail users, especially in the spring.

As snow melts and the ground thaws, the trails become extremely muddy. Using really muddy trails at this time can result in ruts that stay all summer when the trails dry out. Those ruts can make the trails difficult to use all summer and into the next winter. They help create erosion by keeping water on the trails.

Early season damage of trails is a recurring problem. Many people are chomping at the bit to get outside once the snow melts. And some people love to get as muddy as they can while out on the trails.

Some people love to point fingers at motorized off-road vehicles. And while they can do a lot of damage, they are not the only way a soft trail can be damaged. Bikes can leave deep ruts. Foot traffic and horses can also chew up soft trails. We ALL should keep in mind how we are affecting trails for other users.

With a little thought this problem can be greatly reduced.

- **Try to be patient.** Stay off the trails if you can. If you are unsure if a trail is ready to be used, check it out with the commitment to turn back if you are doing too much damage.
- **Choose low impact.** If you use the trails in several different ways, choose the method of travel that will cause the least amount of damage if you do run into some muddy sections.
- **Pick your trails carefully.** Use well-drained trails with lots of southern exposure. They typically dry out the quickest. If you just have to get muddy, please limit your activities to trails that are already thrashed. A little more damage probably won't make a big difference, but a trail in nice shape can be damaged for a season in a hurry.

An alternative to using trails in the spring is to get out on foot or by bike and go explore quiet subdivision roads new to you. You get to be outside, be active, and probably find out new things about your community. For additional ideas see this Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story: <http://tinyurl.com/jfsq5b5>

*(Constantine Khroulev photo of a badly rutted Trail Creek Trail in the White Mountains National Recreation Area.)*



## ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILERS READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



As you start planning trail building and maintenance projects, remember 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).

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### ALLIANCE LEADS DRIVE FOR OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

**SIGN THE LETTER** The Alaska Outdoor Alliance is spearheading an advocacy campaign to make sure COVID-19 stimulus funding includes outdoor recreation projects.

The Alliance, an outdoor industry support group, recognizes that trails are a huge part of outdoor



recreation, so spending on trails is included in the advocacy effort. As part of its campaign, the Alliance is looking for individuals and groups, including businesses, governments and nonprofits, to sign on to an advocacy letter.

Alaska is facing a historical double-whammy of extremely low oil prices and a pandemic. The state will eventually recover from all this, but how it recovers is essential to the future. One of the advantages of trails is that while they support the visitor industry, they also are a

huge benefit to locals. They help our physical and mental health by giving us something to go out, de-stress and get some exercise. They also complement efforts to save community greenspace.

Read about the Alliance's effort here: <https://www.alaskaoutdooralliance.org/post/alaska-outdoor-stimulus-request>

If you support this effort, click the link toward the bottom that says "Join Our Growing List of Supporters! Tell Congress You Support Alaskan Jobs & Outdoors!" or just go directly to the sign on page here: <https://www.alaskaoutdooralliance.org/sign-on-letter-page>

### DEADLINE COMING FOR NPS CHALLENGE COST SHARE PROGRAM

**APPLY** Got a great idea that will help people enjoy and protect a national park, national trail, or Wild and Scenic River? Then round up some partners and get ready, because the NPS Challenge Cost Share Program is **accepting applications until May 22**.

Challenge Cost Share projects are intended to build collaboration between the National Park Service (NPS) and a wide variety of project partners -- non-profit, for-profit, or educational institutions. The Challenge Cost Share program is designed to cultivate shared efforts supporting the NPS mission with National Parks, National Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers and their partners.

The program encourages partnership projects that increase and enhance recreational access and enjoyment of these lands and waters, and that protect them for future generations.

Up to \$25,000 will be awarded per project, and the selected partner organizations will need to match those funds 1-to-1 with their own funds and/or in-kind support.

For complete information and application procedures, go to: <https://www.nps.gov/ccsp>

### SUMMIT ON OUTDOORS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER IN FAIRBANKS

**ATTEND** The 5th Annual Confluence: Summit on the Outdoors is scheduled for Oct. 27 - 29 in Fairbanks at the Westmark Hotel with a room rate of \$79. This year's planned theme - The Future of the Outdoors - seems even more compelling due to the tectonic shifts being brought about by the coronavirus outbreak. We already have guest speakers on topics like behavioral health, seniors, post-C19 advocacy priorities, cultural connections, climate change, sportsmen's priorities, our annual land managers panel and more. We

think this could be a time to strengthen bonds and begin the adventure in renewal together, but will you come? Please take this four-question survey to help guide our decisions: <https://tinyurl.com/v8yxs5l>

*From Alaska Outdoor Alliance email*

## **SEN. SULLIVAN SHOWS SUPPORT FOR LWCF, NATIONAL PARKS**

**SEND THANKS** The following was excerpted from a letter received from Sen. Dan Sullivan:

*On March 10, 2020, Senator Cory Gardner (R – CO) introduced S.3422 to provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and also to address the maintenance backlogs at the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies.*

*This legislation is a combination of two bills previously introduced in the Senate. The first, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act, establishes permanent mandatory funding of \$900 million a year for the LWCF. The second, the Restore Our Parks Act, which I cosponsored, establishes the National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to provide \$9.5 billion over the next five years to address the \$12 billion maintenance backlog for our national parks. S.3422 also extends the provisions of the Restore Our Parks Act to other federal land management agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management, among others.*

*On February 12, 2019, I voted in favor of S.47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which included a provision that would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. On March 12, 2019 this legislation was signed into law by President Trump. I believe that as we move forward with discussions regarding the funding of this important program, we make sure that it is working as intended for taxpayers and the Americans who use these public lands.*

*S.3422 is now awaiting action on the Senate floor.*

For more about Senate Bill 3422 see: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3422>

If you want to thank or otherwise comment to Sen. Sullivan regarding his support of S.3422, contact him at: <https://www.sullivan.senate.gov/contact/email>

## **NATIONAL PARK COMPENDIUMS INCLUDE TRAIL RULE CHANGES**

The National Park Service has updated park compendiums, one for each NPS area in Alaska. A compendium is a compilation of designations, closures and restrictions adopted under the discretionary authority within the regulations covering national parks. This regulatory tool helps manage Alaska's national park areas for the public's enjoyment, use and protection. Some of the changes in the current compendiums include:

- Allowing e-bikes on roads and trails that are also open to traditional bikes
- Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park has adopted changes related to use of the Dyea Campground and requiring registration for overnight use of the Chilkoot trail during the shoulder seasons.



The compendium for each park can be viewed at <https://www.nps.gov/locations/alaska/current-compendiums.htm>

*From What's Up? by Peg Tileston*

## CANDIDATES SOUGHT FOR STATE RECREATIONAL TRAILS BOARD

**APPLY** The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is seeking multiple candidates to fill volunteer positions, representing both motorized and non-motorized trail users, for the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB). 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). Applicants should have knowledge, experience, and interest in outdoor recreational activities and grant-funded programs.

For more information on how to apply, please visit: <http://notice.alaska.gov/197487>

The last day to submit applications is **Friday, May 15**.

If you know anyone who supports trails, works well in a collaborative environment, and has knowledge or experience with trails, please encourage them to apply.

*(From Alaska State Parks email)*

## NATIONAL TRAILS DAY COMING UP THE FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE



**ORGANIZE AN EVENT** Though it is uncertain what group activities will be allowed in June, National Trails Day is still scheduled for June 6. If you are interested in leading or organizing an event, visit <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/> for information on how to host an event and where to register an event. National Trails Day is the country's largest celebration of trails. Events will take place in every state across the country and will include hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more.

## SEEN RECENTLY ON THE STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

### ALASKA STATE PARKS

April 24: PSSST... Alaska, we got you. We know you want to get out there and enjoy some open space--because we do too-- so here is an update on our campgrounds and what to expect in the coming weeks:

Some of our campgrounds are already open, but most are NOT. Yet.

Mostly because it's still April. Here is a little clarification in the form of a press release (see below) and a link to a page with regular updates on openings.

Open updates here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/open.htm>

Press release with more details on how to stay on top of openings and how you can help keep our parks open and safe for everyone: [http://dnr.alaska.gov/.../ne.../2020/mr\\_042420campgroundopen.pdf](http://dnr.alaska.gov/.../ne.../2020/mr_042420campgroundopen.pdf)

April 13: Happy Spring! Just a friendly reminder to keep an eye out for these guys while you are out on the trails. It's that time of year, and there have been multiple bear sightings throughout Alaska.

Take your bear spray or your air horn, and more importantly pay attention to your surroundings, be aware and brush up on what to do when you encounter a bear.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7djrwyyq>

April 23: CHUGACH State Park updates:

**\*\*All snowmobile areas are closed for the season and two parking lots will be closed for construction beginning May 22.\*\***

Due to the DOT Seward Highway (MP 100-105) Construction project starting this spring, the following Chugach State Park facilities will be impacted:

Indian Ballfield Trailhead (MP 103)- This trailhead/parking lot will be closed to public use until May 22, 2020. This lot is needed for the contractor to replace the Indian Creek Bridge. The Bird to Gird pedestrian pathway is expected to remain open however there will be no public parking at this location to gain access to the pathway until MAY 22, 2020. Bird Campground Day-Use Area is a good alternative to gain access to the Bird to Gird path.



Bird Fishing Access Parking Lot (MP 101)- The normally gated overflow section of this parking lot will be used as a contractor staging area. The normal public parking area at this location will remain open. The contractor is aware of the high public use of this location during fishing season and will be minimizing impacts to the recreating public.

Information on this highway project can be found at: <http://sewardhighway100-105.com/>

Thank you for your patience and cooperation!

April 11: The People Behind The Parks: Our Anchorage and Fairbanks Public Information Centers!

Fondly referred to as our "PICsters", we rely on these seven employees to respond to public questions and concerns about our Parks, and SO appreciate the work they do! They are currently practicing social distancing with face masks and window shields but we ask that you please help us limit walk-in traffic as much as possible.

Open 10-5 Monday through Friday, these offices are managed by Corl Kindred, who works closely with all DNR divisions to answer questions and concerns from the public. Both offices are staying open, but are trying to limit the walk-in traffic as much as possible so PLEASE call first and see if we can help virtually before you come to the office.

Anchorage PIC Lead is Nikki Heady and she works with Cole Hendrickson and Pete Mueller. The Fairbanks PIC Lead is Mary Sackinger and she works with Catey Burtness-Adams (arriving May 1st) and College Intern, Sara Church.

\*\*If you have purchased a 2020 Day-Use Parking pass, these employees are the ones that send them to you. If you cannot print a receipt to put in your windshield, you can write your receipt number on a piece of paper and put it where your sticker will go until you receive your sticker. Our Rangers know the number sequence to look for.

April 1: Looking for some ideas for things to do with your family in the next few weeks? Follow AKontheGO!

Erin Kirkland, founder of AKontheGO, is our Alaska State Parks Ambassador and co-conspirator of our Families to Parks Program. AKontheGo is full of great ideas and good information.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9vgf44e>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

### PANDEMIC-RELATED LINKS

- Heading outdoors? Here's what Alaskans should consider during the coronavirus pandemic: <https://tinyurl.com/qnyuc5t>
- Wear a face covering outside when exerting yourself and passing by others: <https://tinyurl.com/qrqntfc>
- Here's how to practice social distancing while enjoying the Great Land: <https://tinyurl.com/y9xdgky2>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- **ENTER** Alaska State Parks 50th Anniversary Photo Contest (run **monthly**): <https://tinyurl.com/qnssp93>
- Denali opens part of park road to public access: <https://tinyurl.com/yaj742g6>
- Alaska Community Forest Council recruiting new members: <https://tinyurl.com/yddjbtbt>
- Brazilian who ran out of food rescued near 'Into the Wild' bus: <https://tinyurl.com/yb3h44pt>
- Alaska State Park campgrounds to open as weather, staffing allow: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ulx74o>
- Public asked to avoid travel on State Forest roads during breakup: <https://tinyurl.com/ybs6usd9>
- Alaska campground hosts usually come from Outside. Now, parks officials are asking locals to volunteer: <https://tinyurl.com/y8oo92fe>

### BEARS

- Fish and Game: 'Do not ever run from a bear': <https://tinyurl.com/y9f3hgej>
- Alaskans warned to stay safe as bears emerge from dens: <https://tinyurl.com/rpp7ujn>
- Springtime brings reports of bear sightings across Anchorage: <https://tinyurl.com/yaon7jqg>
- That time (Craig Medred advice for dealing with bears): <https://craigmedred.news/2020/04/26/that-time/>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION ACCEPTING GRANT APPLICATIONS

**APPLY FOR A GRANT** Is there a trail, parks, or education project you'd like to see funded? Do you know of a trail or park organization looking for project funding? The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Association is still accepting and approving grant applications!

Learn more about the association's grants here: <https://matsutrails.org/our-grants/>

### PALMER TO HOLD COMMUNITY CLEANUP DAY FOR TRAILS, PARKS

The Palmer Annual Community Cleanup Day will be held on May 9. Get out on your favorite trail or park and do some clean-up! This is a great way you can give back to the community and ensure that everyone can enjoy the wild, accessible, and world-class trails in the Mat-Su! Also, it's a great way to get out of the house and get some exercise.

*From What's Up? by Peg Tileston*

### MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION UPDATES OUTERSPATIAL APP

The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation has been upgrading the OuterSpatial app with brand new content, photos, and trail descriptions. There are now over 3200 miles of local trails, parks, and amenities on the app. The OuterSpatial application is a great resource but does not replace a compass, map, and research about the area. Please adhere to trail and park user guidelines so that the entire community can safely recreate during this time. To get the app, go to Download the App: <https://welcome.outerspatial.com/>



*From What's Up? by Peg Tileston*



## SEEN RECENTLY ON THE SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

### ALASKA STATE PARKS

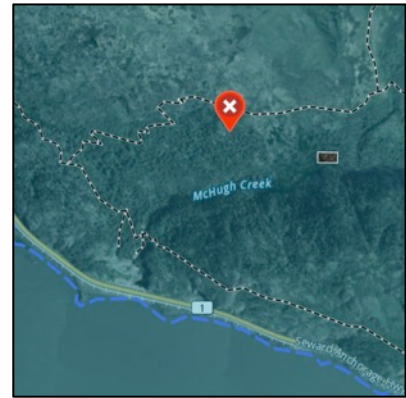
April 27: **\*\*Update on McHugh closure\*\***

McHugh Creek Recreation Area is open for parking and the Turnagain Arm is open to the north and south (parallel to the highway).

THE CLOSURE is to the EAST toward Rabbit Lakes and the moose carcass is approximately one mile east-- to the south of the trail. Signs are posted.

Regardless of where you go, be prepared for a bear encounter by doing your research and planning how you will respond in the an encounter. More details here:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/?adfg=livingwithbears.bearcountry>



April 22: This week's FIND YOUR TRAIL is the Buskin River Trail in Kodiak at the Buskin River State Recreation Site.

<https://tinyurl.com/yd7kk57l>

For those that like to hike or mountain bike, there are old military roads connecting WWII structures hidden in the spruce forest on the north side of the park. Visitors might see a variety of birds and wildlife including brown bears, eagles, harlequin ducks, and harbor seals. A true treasure for residents and visitors alike.

April 21: ALERT **\*\*Trail closures in Northern and Mat-Su Regions due to warmer weather and fast snow melt\*\***

Mat-Su Region: Effective this evening, April 21 at midnight, Nancy Lake SRA will CLOSE to the use of snowmobiles. This is due to the rapid deterioration of the trail and unsafe conditions.

Your cooperation and sharing of this message is greatly appreciated!

April 17: **\*\*Important Hatcher Pass update\*\***



Fishhook Trailhead and Goldmint Trailhead will NOT be open for public assembly or overnight parking effective as of April 16, 2020 and until the State of Alaska health mandates 011 and 012 are lifted. Both trailheads are located in the Hatcher Pass Management Area and managed by Alaska State Parks.

No Public Assembly: Do not loiter in the parking lot, and always maintain social/physical distancing mandates of at least 6 feet.

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/dirorder/320hatcherclose.pdf>

Thank you for your cooperation Alaska! We truly appreciate your patience as we manage the high influx of traffic to our parks and high use of our facilities.

April 8: This week's FIND YOUR TRAIL is the Eklutna Lake Trail in the Chugach State Park. You can travel for miles (12.9 one way) on bike or by foot, along the lake from the trailhead. There are cabins to rent and campsites aplenty that can be reserved ahead of time.

There is even ATV access, Sunday through Wednesday, April 1st through November 30th. For all your options visit this site and start planning your adventure today: <https://tinyurl.com/y8y5f77z>

## ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

April 8: Today, Anchorage Park Foundation would like to thank Wells Fargo for continuing to support Youth Employment in Parks. With the help of our partners and supporters, programs like YEP can keep making a positive impact in the Anchorage community. Thank you!

April 8: Thank you for your support for parks and trails.

Thanks to you, Prop 5 has 53% of the vote. We did it! See election information here:

<https://tinyurl.com/t3qvcru>

## ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION



April 25: Campbell Creek Trail is almost entirely clear of snow and ice! There is some ice in tunnels and under overpasses, and please use caution as you move through those areas.

Maintenance crews will begin sweeping the trails next week, and remember to keep practicing physical distancing of six feet between yourself and others.

The forecast says sun for the weekend, and we hope you are able to spend some time outside!

April 23: The Chester Creek Trail is looking mostly clear! This is a work in progress and there are still some slushy or icy spots, particularly in tunnels, so be aware of variable trail conditions.

We'll be sharing photos from Campbell Creek Trail and the Coastal Trail later this week. Share your trail photos in the comments!

April 11: If you're looking to get outside, Ship Creek Trail is dry and mostly clear of snow and ice.

There are a few short stretches of icy patches, and the Post Road tunnel has a significant amount of ice in it. Generally, Ship Creek Trail is one of the lesser used multi-use trails, making it easy to spend time outdoors while maintaining six feet of physical distance between users. It can be accessed near the Bridge Restaurant in downtown, and at Tyson Elementary in Mountain View (the gates are closed, but it's a short walk down the hill to the trail entrance). Enjoy!



April 13: The Anchorage Waterways Council is conducting a survey about Anchorage watersheds. We encourage you to take 5-10 minutes if you can to complete the survey, and you'll be entered for some prizes for doing so.

Prizes are:

5 - \$20 Moose's Tooth gift cards

4 - \$25 AK Mill and Feed gift cards

4 - \$25 Winestyles gift cards

Take the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZD8LBG2>

Thanks for your help, and good luck in the drawing!

April 10: Thank you, Anchorage voters, for voting to approve the Parks and Recreation bond! We're grateful to live in a community that values public parks and trails.

Learn more about the projects Proposition 5 funds will support by exploring this interactive map:

<https://arcg.is/0TevnX>

April 9: Anchorage now has over 14 hours of daylight! ☀☀

All that sunshine means it's time for P&R Maintenance crews to begin clearing snow and ice from the multi-use trails. Crews are starting this week on some spur trails and will be moving to the main trails, as weather permits.

### SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES

April 20: Please keep off the Hillside and Kincaid STA Trails. Wait for them to dry out. We will let you know when the trails are ready!

While you are anxiously waiting, remember to become an annual member of STA. Your annual donation pays for weedwhacking, tools, insurance and new trails. Donate at [www.singletrackadvocates.org/](http://www.singletrackadvocates.org/)



April 6: We are bummed to see the unauthorized tree cutting off the Spencer Loop which felled 5 spruce trees across Eh-Line. The week prior, trees were limbed on Janice's Jive without prior consideration. Trail enthusiasts are encouraged to contact STA with constructive ideas on how we can make the trails better for all users.

### MAT-SU TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION



April 21: With breakup and Spring rains occurring in the Valley, our trails are wet!

Muddy trails get damaged with every footstep due to soil compaction and erosion. These prints and tracks can last through the summer!

Think you can walk around muddy areas on the trail? Walking off-trail can trample vegetation, widen paths, and cause even more damage to the trail and environment.

Give those muddy trails a break!

Check Out Current Mat-Su trail closures here ->

Mat-Su Borough- <https://www.matsugov.us/trails>

Alaska State Parks - <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

April 16: With your support, the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation offers grants to a variety of projects in the Mat-Su Valley! Last Fall, we were able to provide some of the funding needed for Petersville Community NPC to purchase a Snowcat to groom trails, offer recreation opportunities, and aid Search and Rescue Operations. They did a great job keeping the trails maintained this winter. Thanks, PCNPC, for all your hard work!

Check out some of the other projects we've been involved with -> <https://tinyurl.com/ybv9xdu>

### SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Anchorage closes down playgrounds, but says parks and trails will remain open: <https://tinyurl.com/s44vvry>
- **Comment deadline May 14:** Proposed Easement Realignment of ADL 33023; Proposed Realignment of RST 1691 Herning Trail–Question Creek (near Talkeetna): <http://notice.alaska.gov/197762>
- Swan Lake Fire trails update (Kenai Peninsula): <https://tinyurl.com/ycrbo8et>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Springtime brings reports of bear sightings across Anchorage: <https://tinyurl.com/y7vust5r>

### LAND TRUST TRYING TO SAVE TRAILS NEAR ISBERG REC AREA

**DONATE** Trails associated with the Isberg Recreation Area west of Fairbanks are in danger of being lost due to development. The Interior Alaska Land Trust is making an effort to purchase some land that would save the trails. The letter below appeared as a post on the Cripple Creek Neighborhood Facebook page.

*Hi neighborhood trail users,*

*Some of you may have noticed that there has been recent dozer work in the area of the Isberg Rec Area. Trails that many assume are part of the Isberg Rec Area are actually on private property without an easement - the owner has generously allowed use of those trails for many years, but he could legally close them anytime. I've included a map - the green shaded area is FNSB property, while the property labeled "1" is where the recent dozer work has happened. (If you're familiar with the Isberg trails, this is roughly all of the property east of the powerline that goes north-south from Cripple Creek to near Isberg Road.) The red-dotted lines are some popular trails, which, if you've used them, you know are some of the best in Fairbanks!*

*The property labeled 2 is also for sale, and is critical for access to the Isberg Rec area for many of our neighbors.*

*These two properties span the entirety of the valley, and trail access through the valley could be cut off by this development. Those that live on or near Basin Road, for example, will want to look closely at this map.*

*But of course, the owners don't own the land for the purpose of it being a public recreation area, and have plans to develop it or sell it. The dozer work is the beginning of that development. This would be detrimental to the trails in the area, and to public access to the Isberg and Rosie Creek trails from Chena Ridge.*

*I've spoken with the owners (who are both very nice people), and both are amenable to selling their parcels instead of developing them. The Interior Alaska Land Trust (I'm a board member) is beginning to try to raise funds to buy the property to keep it open for public use forever. The Land Trust own lands throughout Fairbanks and allows public recreation on all of them (you've probably enjoyed the some of our properties without knowing it - especially if you use the trails in Goldstream).*

*Buying this property will be a heavy lift and will involve a substantial amount of money. We are currently searching for available grants, but community support will be critical to providing matching funds for grants.*

*At this time, if you'd like to help one of the best things that you can do is become a*



member of the Land Trust through our website <https://interioraklandtrust.org/> (click on the Get Involved tab). We are all all-volunteer board, with one part-time employee and very low overhead. We know this land will be very important to some of you, and we allow larger donations to be earmarked for a particular project - ie, you can donate to this land acquisition, but if it falls through and we fail to buy the land we will return your money.

We're in the early stages, but we will move as quickly as we can. Please join today, and if you'd like to get involved you can reach out to me here or to [InteriorAKLandTrust@gmail.com](mailto:InteriorAKLandTrust@gmail.com)  
Thank you for your support!

## TRUST ACQUIRES LAND WITH CRITICAL TRAIL CONNECTION

The Interior Alaska Land Trust recently acquired a critical piece of land in the Goldstream Valley from generous landowners Frank Steffensen and Christina Dix. The land contains a trail that connects trail systems on the east and west side of Ballaine Road. It crosses Ballaine Road just to the north of the Goldstream Creek bridge.

Dave Ruzicka and Seth Adams wrote about the purchase at trail in the spring 2020 edition of the IALT newsletter. Below is an article from the newsletter written by Adams. The map below shows the area of the property and trail crossing.

*We often take trails for granted in Fairbanks. For many of us, being able to walk out our doors and onto a neighborhood trail for our daily escape is one of the most important facets of life here. What we don't always realize is that many of these trails are not permanently protected.*



*One of the best examples is the trail crossing our newly-acquired parcels adjacent to Ballaine Road (Steffensen and Dix). These properties host one of the main, arterial trails crossing Goldstream Valley. Before our agreement to purchase those parcels was finalized last summer, most trail users likely didn't know they were only able to use that trail thanks to the generosity of its previous owners. If they had put up a "No Trespassing" sign, then that trail would have been immediately closed. If the property had been sold to a developer, then the trails may have*

*been lost forever.*

*Thanks to the generous support of our members and sustaining donors, IALT acquired the Steffensen and Dix parcels last year and therefore preserved this vital trail corridor in Goldstream Valley. Preserving critical junctions in public green spaces is a priority for us at the Land Trust. If trails are an important part of your life in Fairbanks, please consider making a donation to IALT today.*

*Without your financial support, these acquisitions would not be possible. The IALT board feels a new sense of urgency related to another private property in the Cripple Creek watershed that contains a popular trail. The property is vulnerable to imminent development. We're in discussions with the owner and are beginning to fundraise. Please stay-tuned for updates.*

**DONATE** The land trust, which is working to purchase another piece of land in that area with a critical trail connection, is always looking for donations and volunteers. To donate, read the rest of the newsletter, or otherwise find out more about the trust see: <https://interioraklandtrust.org/>

## GRANT APPROVED FOR ROSIE CREEK FOREST ROAD/TRAIL PROJECT

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.

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

The 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 project got a favorable response from the public during a public meeting this past fall.

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.

While the proposal has drawn attention to the recreation potential of the Rosie Creek area, many people already use the roads and trails informally winter and summer. However, some have been discouraged from venturing there because of the lack of 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/uwf75v>

For questions or to get email updates on the project, please contact Alison Arians at the Division of Forestry at [alison.arians@alaska.gov](mailto: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)*



## LAND DEAL THAT WOULD PROTECT ADMA TRAILS GETS CLOSER

An effort to increase the size of the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, which would help protect a portion of the Alaska Dog Mushing Association trails, is one step closer to completion.

A request to subdivide a block of University of Alaska land, one portion of which would become part of the refuge, was tentatively approved by the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Platting Board at its April 15 meeting. The preliminary approval has several conditions, none of which would directly affect the trails. An action memorandum from the meeting, which explains the conditions, can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yay5xa6t>

The request to subdivide is a part of a series of events that must take place in order for the land to

be purchased from the University of Alaska and transferred to the refuge, a deal being shepherded by The Conservation Fund. This deal, if completed, may result in the addition of more land that contains ADMA trails being added to the refuge.

To find out more about this issue read the three Interior Alaska Trails blog posts: December 10 (<https://tinyurl.com/r29c5vx>), February 7 (<https://tinyurl.com/wbh8xph>), and March 14 (<https://tinyurl.com/txh6kxm>). (The editor of this newsletter also wrote the blog posts.)

## **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**

### **ALASKA STATE PARKS**

April 21: ALERT \*\*Trail closures in Northern and Mat-Su Regions due to warmer weather and fast snow melt\*\*

Northern Region: Effective April 20, the following motorized trails are closed: Compeau, Angel Creek Hillside, and Stiles. The Middle Fork is a winter only trail and it is closed as well.

Your cooperation and sharing of this message is greatly appreciated!

(Note: The trails are still open to foot traffic.)

April 21: Alaska State Parks Artist-in-Residence, Gail Davidson, from Fairbanks wrote about her recent AIR experience at the North Fork public use cabin in the Chena River State Recreation Area.

You can find it on our Parks blog\*\*: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/parksblog.htm>

\*\*We are always looking for outdoor bloggers, please reach out via email if you are interested:

[wendy.sailors@alaska.gov](mailto:wendy.sailors@alaska.gov)

## **INTERIORWIDE LINKS**

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### **SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL**

- Long winter leads to aggressive moose in Interior Alaska: <https://tinyurl.com/y9blblv>

## **SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES**

## **SEEN RECENTLY ON THE SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES**

### **TRAIL MIX, INC.**

April 2: Hey Juneau! Trail Mix is currently hiring for Trail Crew and Trail Crew Lead positions!

If you enjoy working hard in the woods while contributing to an incredible community resource, apply today!

Resumes can be sent to [info@trailmixinc.org](mailto:info@trailmixinc.org)

## ALASKA STATE PARKS

April 15: This Week's FIND YOUR TRAIL is Mt. Roberts Trail in Juneau.

Easily accessed from downtown Juneau, this trail begins on Basin Road, just beyond the wooden trestle bridge. The trail features views of Lynn Canal, bears, marmots, spruce grouse, and wildflowers.

From the other side...The Mt. Roberts Tramway brings thousands of people up this mountain each year. Hikers can pay five dollars for a ride down on the tram in the summer months. The lower portion of the trail was recently improved, with the SIXTH STREET ENTRANCE NOW CLOSED due to unstable slopes.

Easy to moderate, this trail is for all levels and you can turn around at the tram for an hour or so hike, or keep going toward the peak as long as snow allows. For more info, check out the map on this page:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc97tyw3>



## SOUTHEAST LINKS

- **Volunteers needed** to help build single-track mountain bike trail of Sitka Cross Trail:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7xmtb3l>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### AMERICAN TRAILS OFFERS MORE WEBINAR OPTIONS

**WATCH A WEBINAR** With more people working and being stuck at home, we are seeing incredible jumps in attendance of our webinars over the past couple months with 600+ in attendance per webinar; and all indications are that this is likely to continue. Given these trends, we feel like we can serve the trails community by offering increased options for training in place of the many conferences that have been canceled/postponed this year.

In case you missed it, we had over 1,300 people register for our last two sponsored webinars. You can view the recordings below.

- Introduction to the Great Trails Workshops: What Makes a Great Trail Great?:  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/5847437438466262797>
- Trails Move People: Articulating the Impact and Amplifying the Voice of the Trails Community:  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/2627622089958393611>

And don't forget about this upcoming webinar training opportunity:

- May 14: Common Ground: Shared Goals for the Trails and Health Communities (currently looking for a sponsor to make this webinar FREE to attendees): [www.americantrails.org/training/common-ground](http://www.americantrails.org/training/common-ground)

In order to best support the trails community during these difficult times, we plan to make even more training webinars available over the next several months. We typically hold one webinar per month in our Advancing Trails Webinar Series but are looking at holding two to four webinars per month starting this month.



### *Sponsor An American Trails Webinar*

We have a great opportunity for advertisers (which means great opportunities for our webinar attendees) during the unprecedented pandemic that has required so many drastic changes to all of our lives. We understand that some of you may have experienced changes within your own company and business may not be going as usual.

We would love to partner with you to make more and better online training opportunities available to the entire trails community. We are looking for sponsors for our webinar series that would make our webinars (and the appropriate learning credits) FREE to all attendees. We believe not only the online trainings themselves have been of interest to so many stuck and/or working from home at this time, but offering them for free has played a huge role in increased attendance since many are out of work.

For more information contact Candace Gallagher, Director of Operations (530/645-3096 direct; [candace@americantrails.org](mailto:candace@americantrails.org)).

*From American Trails email*

## **SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED FOR OUTDOOR PROFESSIONALS**

**APPLY** The application period for the Christopher K. Jarvi Scholarship to Advance Partnerships will **open May 1 and close on July 31**.

This scholarship was created to help dedicated professionals explore ways to enrich existing and integrate more partnerships into their work to benefit and bring value to parks, public lands and the communities that host them.

Learning about partnerships and developing skills is an iterative process. The more one learns and practices, the greater the innovation and partner engagement in all aspects of recreation and parks. The concept and practice of partnering will change as the needs of parks and recreation professionals evolve. This scholarship encourages applications to take the practice of partnerships to the next level.

To learn more about the scholarship, including eligibility and expectations of the applicants, see: <https://www.recpro.org/christopher-k-jarvi-scholarship>

*(From the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals website)*

## **NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS**

### *TRAILS AND THE PANDEMIC*

- Using Trails and Outdoor Spaces Safely in the Wake of COVID-19: <https://tinyurl.com/t3tzegh>
- Why Going Outside Is Good For Your Health, Especially Right Now: <https://tinyurl.com/vua4uab>
- Which outdoor sports and athletic activities are safe during a pandemic?: <https://tinyurl.com/r4xpv52>
- Exercising Outdoors with a Face Mask: <https://tinyurl.com/rlvesy4>
- Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19 When Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities (CDC): <https://tinyurl.com/te6ruyj>
- Thinking of Hitting the Trail During COVID-19? Answer These Questions: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4jmxw4>
- 11 Things to Do at Home When You Can't Visit Your Favorite Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/y7mejs8r>
- Are Running or Cycling Actually Risks for Spreading Covid-19?: <https://tinyurl.com/v682vks>

### *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)

## ADVOCACY

- NOHVCC Partner Provides Way To Support Increased Funding For RTP: <https://tinyurl.com/y86b9ztc>

## 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

- Intl. Mountain Biking Assn. Trail Accelerator Grants (ddline May 31): <https://tinyurl.com/scg2fnu>
- Clif Bar Family Foundation grants (for groups, projects; ddline June 1): <http://tinyurl.com/y5es3wjc>
- National Forest Foundation’s Matching Awards Program (ddline June 9): <https://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

## TRAIL GUIDES

- 5 Great American Horse Trails: <https://tinyurl.com/uhf5xde>
- 50 States, 50 Trails: The Ultimate Hiking Guide For When Trails Reopen
  - Alabama To Montana: <https://tinyurl.com/tbzgjdk>
  - Nebraska To Wyoming: <https://tinyurl.com/rcg8dyh>

## TRAILS AND HEALTH

- How Exercise Keeps You Healthy: [www.adventurecycling.org/blog/how-exercise-keeps-you-healthy/](http://www.adventurecycling.org/blog/how-exercise-keeps-you-healthy/)
- Endurance Exercise May Be a Speed Bump That Slows Alzheimer’s: <https://tinyurl.com/y88uy3te>

## OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Notice of Availability of New BLM/Friends Group Partnership Toolkit: [www.blm.gov/policy/ib-2020-019](http://www.blm.gov/policy/ib-2020-019)
- Five Reasons Trail Research Matters: <https://tinyurl.com/y9zfw4s>

## INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- 10 Most Difficult Hiking Trails In Asia: <https://tinyurl.com/yagf5hhd>
- The Longest Coastal Walking Route in the World Will Open in England Next Year (Video): <https://tinyurl.com/y89a69pq>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- 12 Virtual Walking Trails Around the World That You Can Experience Right Now (Video): <https://tinyurl.com/y7dw7ys5>
- Free Online Cartography Course (Registration closes on May 6): <https://bit.ly/2Sgg8iO>

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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)