

Seward to Anchorage Corridor:

EXPANDING TRAILS & HUTS IN ALASKA'S MOST ACCESSIBLE ALPINE SETTING



The Seward to Anchorage corridor offers something valuable and rare in Alaska: a road accessible, beautiful mountain landscape, connecting Alaska's centers of population and most visited destinations¹, and managed to provide and sustain recreation opportunities. The 120+ mile drive from Anchorage to Seward goes through awe-inspiring terrain, from coastal waters to alpine valleys, crossing through Chugach National Forest and Chugach State Park. Along the way is a string of attractive small towns, providing commercial services from hotels to gear rentals.

The area is rich in recreation, history and culture, including the Southern Trek of the world-renowned Iditarod National Historic Trail. Much of the Iditarod route and the adjacent trail system is already in place, ranging from well-established to primitive backcountry routes. Filling these gaps could provide a seamless route from Seward to Anchorage, and a big, achievable step towards a "long trail" extending to Fairbanks.

The Iditarod is just one part of a larger system of trails in the corridor. In the National Forest these include the Resurrection and Lost Lake trails, and Whistle Stop system with its planned hut-to-hut system. Trail routes continue into Chugach State Park, including Arctic to Indian, Crow Pass trails and trails along Turnagain Arm with a key missing link near the community of Indian. Improving these trails and taking greater advantage of the area's inviting towns and other recreation amenities could help this corridor become an even more attractive statewide and international four-season destination, bringing real benefits to corridor communities and regional residents and helping grow year-round jobs and businesses.

Opportunities: Alaska's most visited overnight destinations

Anchorage #1, Seward #4

186 Mile "Long Trail"

once gaps are filled between Seward & Eagle River/Anchorage

5 communities

along the Corridor; inviting places to stay, dine, shop or refill a backpack

+22.9%

Increase in cross-gulf cruise passengers 2018 to 2019

¹ Alaska Visitor Statistics Program - AVSP 7 – Section 5: Visitor Profile - Destinations and Activities

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED INVESTMENTS

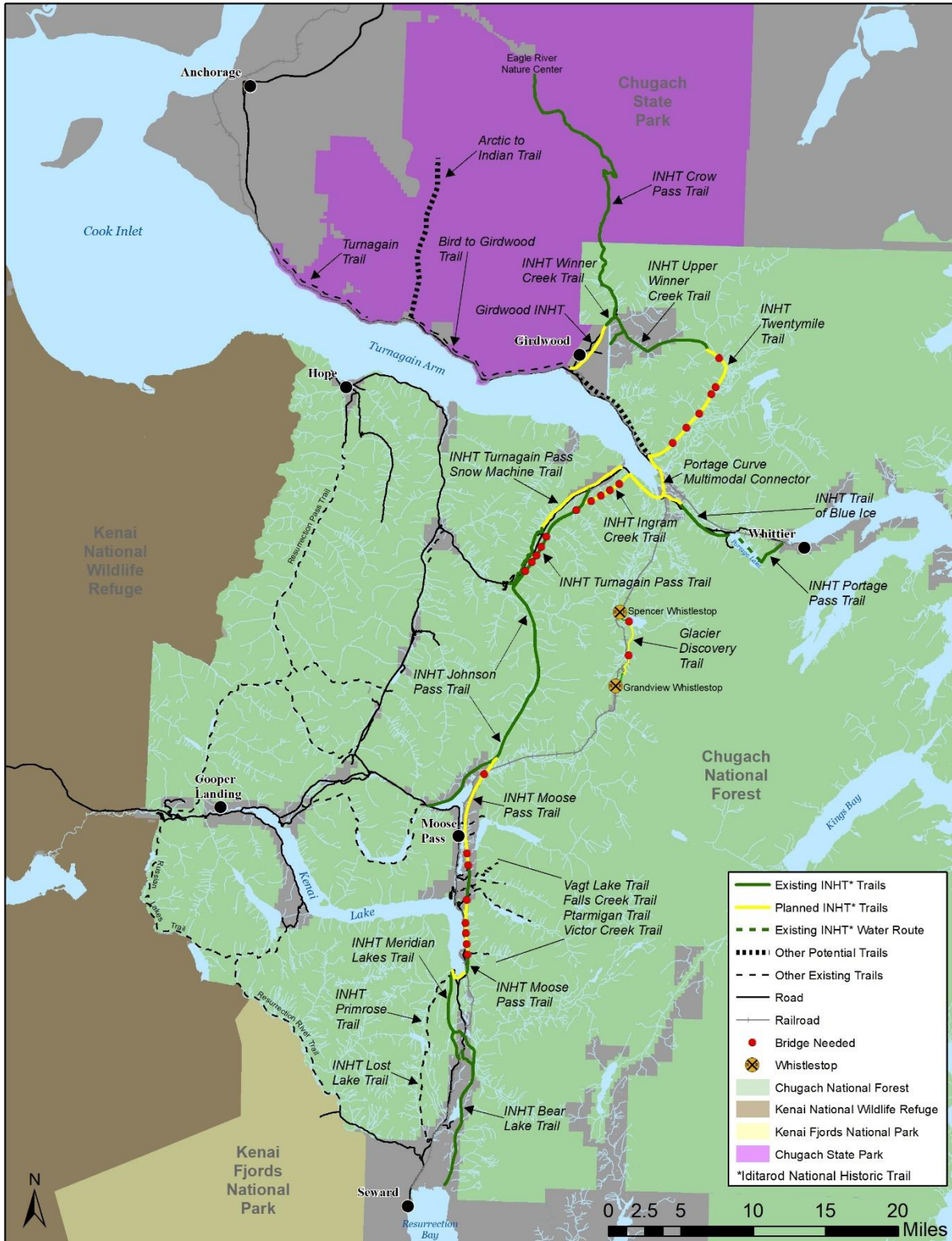
The table below presents the list of projects identified in discussions with agencies, industry associations, public interest nonprofits and trail user groups. These projects fill the gaps and add bridges along the route of the Southern Trek of the INHT, and also recommend implementation of the Whistle Stop hut-to-hut trail system, as well as extension of the INHT through the State Park and improvements to adjacent trail systems. Details are presented on the following pages.

<i>Seward-to-Anchorage Corridor Projects Summary</i>			
<i>Project</i>	<i>Lead and Support</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
1. Iditarod National Historic Trail – Southern Trek			
Phase 1 - Trail Construction	Forest Service, National Forest Foundation, Alaska Trails, Student Conservation Association, Chugach Children’s Forest	\$970,000	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
Phase 1 - Trail Bridges		\$4.6 million	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
2. Whistle Stop/Glacier Discovery Trail and Hut to Hut System			
Planned Trail Construction	Forest Service, Alaska Huts Association, National Forest Foundation, AK Railroad	\$3.4 million	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
Trail Bridges		\$750,000	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
Hut-to-Hut System, Phase 1	Alaska Huts Association	\$1.032 M	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
Hut-to-Hut System, Phase 2	Alaska Huts Association	\$1.08 M	Near Term – Planning in Progress
3. Chugach State Park Connectors			
Crow Pass Trail - Brushing	Chugach State Park, Alaska Trail Stewards	\$15,000	Near Term (Shovel Ready)
Crow Pass Trail - Reroutes	Chugach State Park	\$3 million	Mid Term - Planning needed
Arctic-to-Indian – winter	Chugach State Park	\$10,000	Near Term – Planning in Progress
Arctic-to-Indian – summer	Chugach State Park	\$350-500,000	Mid Term - Planning needed
Windy Corner Connector	AK DOT/PF	\$3 million	Near Term – Planning in Progress
Potter Marsh-Indian Trail	AK DOT/PF	Est. \$5 million	Longer Term – Planning needed

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS¹

Partners and supporters that helped develop and refine these recommendations include Chugach National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Chugach State Park, National Forest Foundation, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Kenai Mountains -Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area, Alaska Trails, Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers, Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association.

¹ See *Introduction* for what is meant by partners and supporters.



Trails and locations featured in the Seward-to-Anchorage Corridor chapter.

Source: US Forest Service

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT PROJECTS

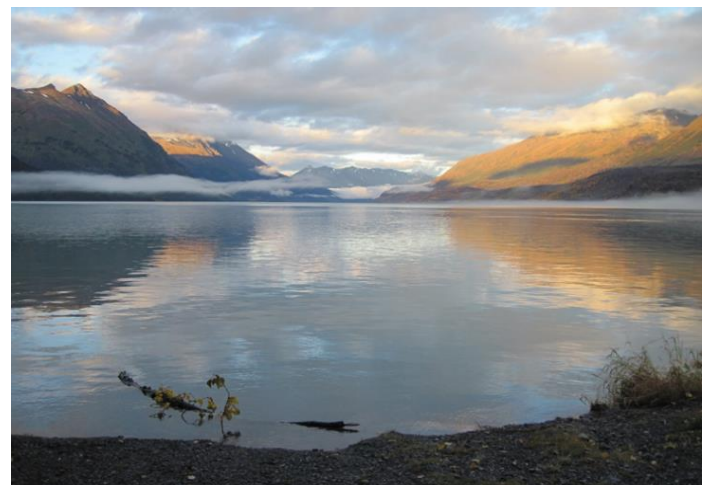
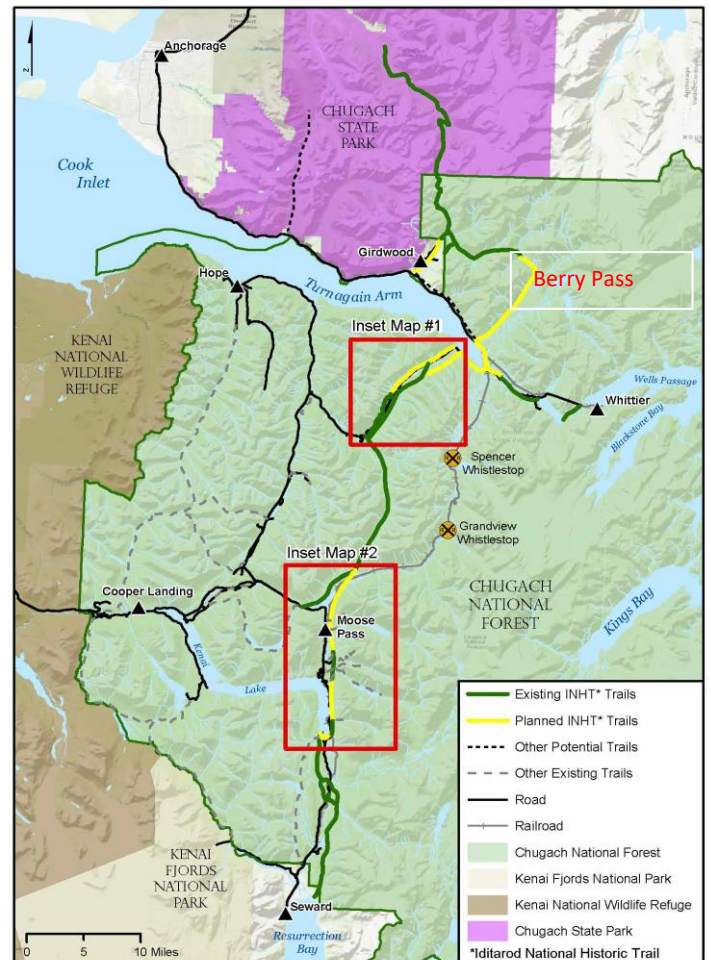
1. THE IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL – *SOUTHERN TREK*

Project Description: The Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) – *Southern Trek* travels across some of the most spectacular landscapes in Alaska. Originally a winter trail during the gold rush for travel from Seward to the Iditarod gold mining district, agencies and partners today are re-establishing parallel recreation routes that connect with existing trails from Seward to Eagle River. The INHT was singled out by the US Forest Service as one of 15 trails nationwide as a priority for improvement and greater prominence.

US Forest Service and its partners are working to create a continuous 186-mile, 4 season trail including motorized and non-motorized winter use. Once completed, this trail system will provide both a “long-trail” recreation experience as well as many opportunities for day trips. With its proximity to the Seward Highway and local communities, the Iditarod National Historic Trail - *Southern Trek* will offer year-round recreation and generate economic opportunities to local businesses who cater to visitors using the trail system (restaurants, lodging, rentals, and transport services).

US Forest Service is the lead agency on this project and is working in collaboration with the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Chugach State Park, Bureau of Land Management, City of Seward, and the Municipality of Anchorage as well as partner organizations such as the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, the Kenai Mountains - Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area Community Corridor Association, the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers, Alaska Trails, Alaska Geographic, the Heritage Land Bank, and National Forest Foundation.

The projects highlighted in the maps and table below are the first of three phases for completion of the entire trail system. Phase 1 trail segments and bridges will help provide a continuous trail experience between Seward and Moose Pass and across most of Turnagain Pass.



View west along the future trail: sunrise over Kenai Lake in area south of Moose Pass. Source: USFS

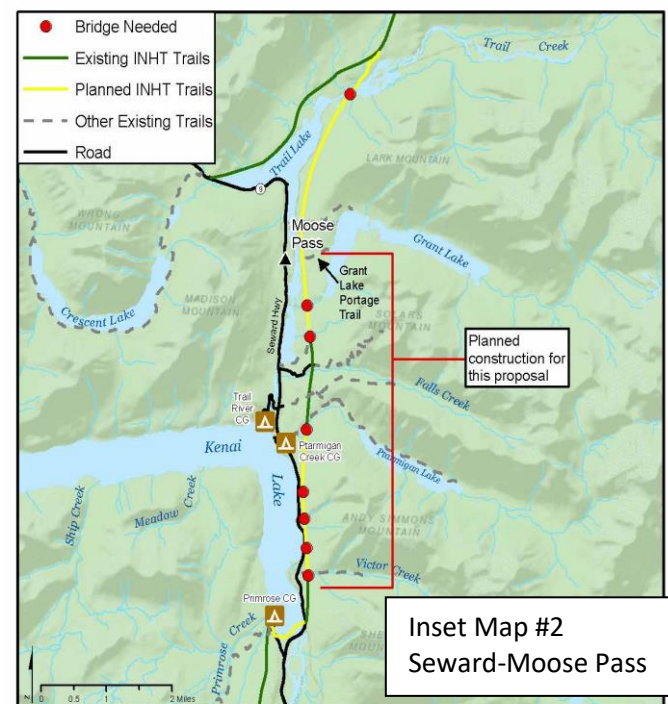
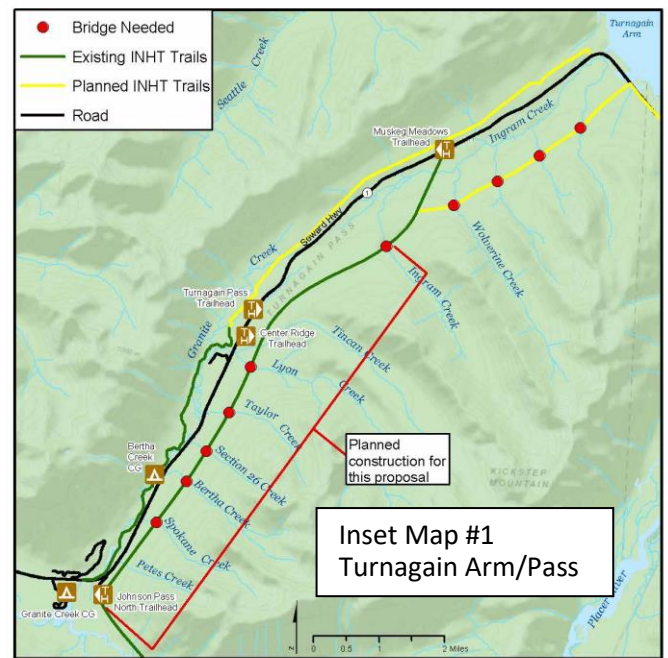
Phase 1 investments have been selected for this initiative based on the priorities for trail development by the US Forest Service and Trails Initiative partners. This will link to ongoing work by Chugach State Park to improve trails between Girdwood, Anchorage and Eagle River, and sets the stage for additional investments in trails and bridges in Phase 2 and Phase 3. The full potential for economic benefits to communities and a robust range of recreation opportunities will be realized when all phases of implementation are completed, and the trail is continuous between Seward, Anchorage and Eagle River.

Planned Bridges: Stream crossing locations are shown on both inset maps. The priority of bridge construction is as follows but could be changed as needed:

1. Upper Ingram Creek
2. Victor Creek
3. Grant Creek
4. Lyon Creek
5. Taylor Creek
6. Spokane Creek
7. Bertha Creek
8. Section 26 Creek
9. Vagt Creek
10. Ptarmigan Creek
11. Unnamed Creek north of Rocky Creek
12. Rocky Creek
13. Unnamed Creek north of Victor Creek



The many faces of the INHT: early season trip from Girdwood over Berry Pass (see map for location) and then a pack raft float out the 20 Mile River. As shown in the map above, full build-out will extend the INHT through the 20 Mile Valley and to this sweet divide between 20 Mile & Girdwood. *Source: Chris Beck*



Above (maps by USFS): Phase 1 bridges and trail segment improvements will lead to two high priority benefits:

- creating a nearly continuous trail between Seward and Moose Pass (work is in progress to secure funding for trails in the Snow River bridge area)
- a continuous trail from Turnagain Pass to Muskeg Meadows

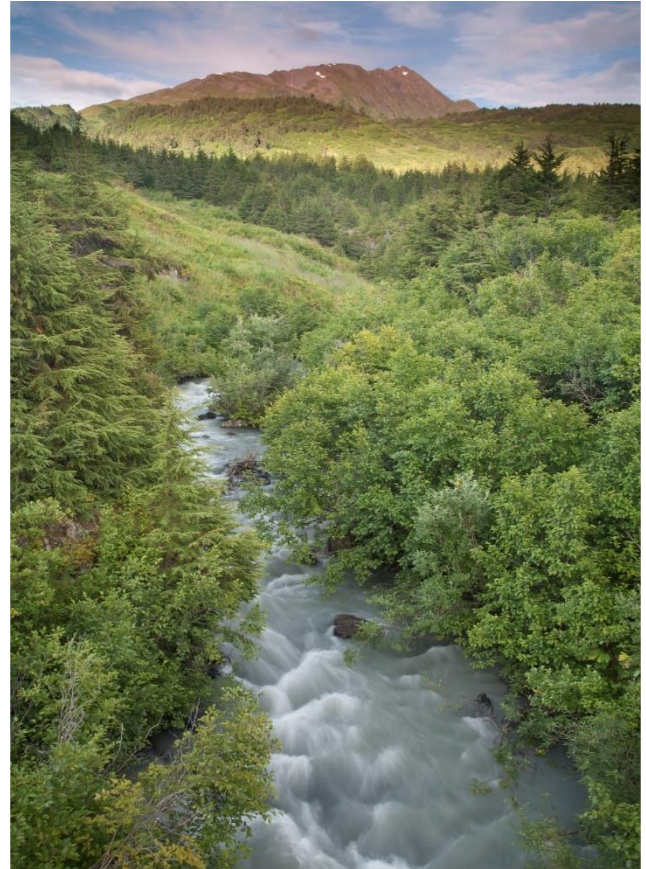
IDITAROD TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – FILLING GAPS, BUILDING BRIDGES

<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
Phase 1 Priority Projects					
<p>1. Phase 1 - Planned Trail construction – 6.4 miles</p> <p>Approximately 2.3 miles has been designed, remaining 4.1 needs design work.</p>	US Forest Service.	Connects existing segments of Iditarod National Historic Trail - <i>Southern Trek</i> near the Moose Pass community.	Bridges required for this section of trail cross major creeks such as Victor Creek and Ptarmigan Creek. The bridges are costly to fabricate and install. Bridge construction will require use of	\$970,000	<p>Near Term (Shovel Ready)</p> <p>Any level of funding can be utilized. Segments of planned trail can be built separately or all at once under one contract.</p>
<p>2. Phase 1 - Thirteen planned bridges</p>	US Forest Service	Connects existing and planned trail segments of INHT - <i>Southern Trek</i> near the Moose Pass community and in the Turnagain Pass area. Bridges will provide critical connections to existing segments of trail.	helicopters to place bridge components in areas not accessible from the road system by mechanized equipment.	\$4.6 million	<p>Near Term (Shovel Ready)</p> <p>Project is scalable to purchase and install one or more bridges based on funding received.</p>
Phase 2 and 3 Priority Projects					
<p>Phase 2 – Planned trail construction – 7.4 miles</p> <p>4 planned bridges along this planned trail segment</p>	US Forest Service	<p>This trail segment connects the existing INHT Turnagain Pass Trail system to the Portage Curve</p> <p>Connects Muskeg Meadows Trailhead with the planned Ingram Creek Trailhead on Turnagain Arm completing the entire Turnagain Pass Trail portion</p>	These bridges cross major creeks such as Wolverine Creek. The bridges are costly to fabricate and install.	\$4.0 million	<p>Mid Term - Planning in Progress Multimodal connector Trail system that will be constructed in the next 5 years. Project is scalable to purchase and install one or more bridges and construct segment of planned trail based on funding received.</p>
<p>Phase 2 – Planned trail construction – 5.1 miles</p> <p>1 planned bridge</p>	US Forest Service	Connects the INHT Moose Pass Trail between Grant Lake Portage Trail Junction and Johnson Pass Trail system	The crossing at Trail Creek would require a complex bridge and will be costly to fabricate and install. Trail Creek is not safe to cross without a bridge structure.	\$3.7 million	<p>Mid Term – Planning in Progress</p> <p>This planned trail segment will provide the final trail segment for the entire trail system from Seward to Turnagain Arm.</p>
<p>Phase 3 – Planned trail construction - 9.5 miles</p> <p>Construction of 8 trail bridges</p>	US Forest Service	Twentymile Trail from the planned trailhead along the Seward Highway south of Girdwood to the existing INHT Winner Creek Trail that ends at Rosehip Creek near Berry Pass	This terrain is very challenging and rugged and will require costly trail construction methods.	\$7.6 million	<p>Longer Term- Planning in Progress</p> <p>This planned trail segment will provide the final trail segment for the entire INHT system from Seward to Eagle River.</p>

*where relevant this column includes background on status



Partnerships are critical to build and maintain trails: volunteers help build Rocky Creek trail. *Source: USFS*



The Turnagain Pass area has all the ingredients of an accessible, enticing destination – except a trail. Phase 1 of this project would fill that gap. *Source: USFS*

Other Trails in the Seward-Anchorage Corridor

While completing the INHT – *Southern Trek* is the first priority, other trails in the Chugach are part of what makes the Seward-Anchorage corridor such an appealing recreation destination for both residents and visitors. Work will continue to be needed to maintain these trails, including brushing on trails like the southern portions of the Lost Lake and Resurrection Pass trails, and the Crow Pass trail from the pass to Eagle River.



In addition to the INHT, the Anchorage -Seward Recreation Corridor features several world-class, four season trails, including: Lost Lake (*above right*), Resurrection Trail (*below right*) with its popular USFS public use cabins. Groups like the sponsors of the annual Lost Lake Trail run and Alaska Trails Stewards are working to help maintain these trails in partnership with the USFS.

(*Source: above - Mark Spano; below - <https://thedyrt.com/camping/alaska/juneau-lake-cabin>*)



2. WHISTLE STOP AND GLACIER DISCOVERY TRAIL

The Alaska Railroad winds its way up from Turnagain Arm, climbing to a pass on the way south towards Moose Pass, and Seward. The railroad opens access to an otherwise difficult to reach, spectacular terrain. A partnership between the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the US Forest Service is developing a system of trails connecting back country railroad “Whistlestops”, a unique and increasingly popular opportunity to visit backcountry glaciers, lakes and alpine environments. The trail system provides access to a US Forest Service cabin, hiking and numerous paddling routes, and outfitter and guide services. Future development includes plans for a hut to hut system to be constructed and operated by the Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts organization (*see following section*).

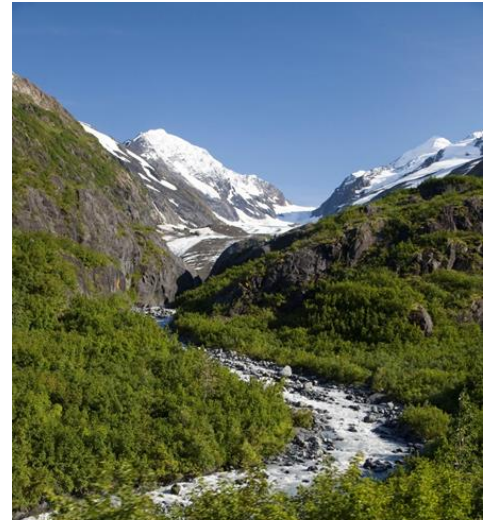
This Glacier Discovery Trail project aims to further improve trails and other infrastructure accessible from Railroad Whistlestops along the route. This trail starts at the Spencer Whistlestop and runs south through rugged backcountry and over roaring whitewater gorges. After paralleling the Spencer Glacier lakeshore, the trail climbs over a ridge past the stunning Bartlett Glacier before reconnecting with the Railroad at the future Bartlett Whistlestop.

Parts of the trail are already built, but extensive work is still needed for key river crossings and miles of challenging terrain. Once built, this trail system will provide a “long-trail” recreation experience linking four Whistlestops, backcountry huts, US Forest Service cabins, and access to several river systems.

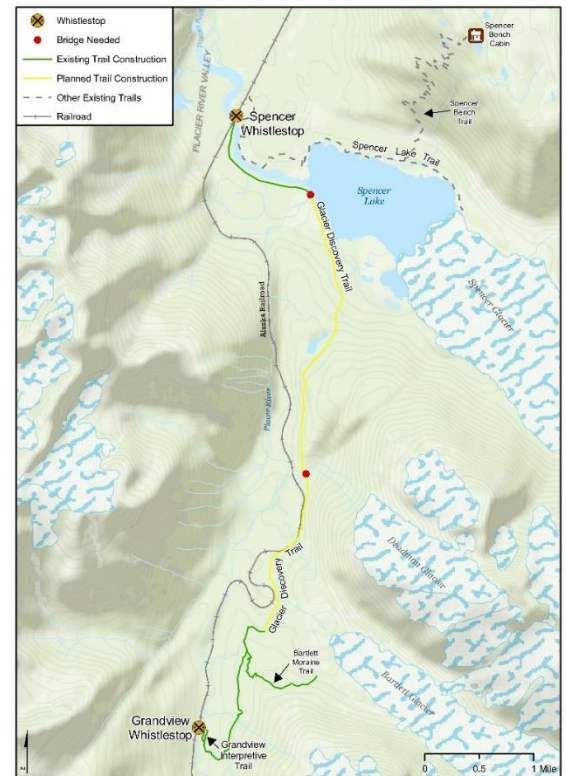
The projects highlighted in the table below have been selected based on the priorities for trail development by US Forest Service and Trails Initiative partners. These include construction of 10.5 miles of planned trail segments and construction of two key bridges.

Building the bridge over Spencer Gorge would be the first construction priority for this project. The bridge allows easy access of workers to the job site from the base camp and allows the use of mechanized equipment. The bridge would also reduce the number of helicopter sling loads required to move equipment and supplies for the planned trail construction.

US Forest Service is the lead agency and is working in collaboration with the Alaska Railroad Corporation and Alaska Wilderness and Mountain Huts Association.



View of Bartlett Glacier from the AKRR route south of Turnagain Arm. Source: USFS



Planned route of the Glacier Discovery trail, connecting three Whistlestops, and the critical first step in development of the hut to hut system described in the section that follows.

Day visitors take the AK Railroad train to the Spencer Whistlestop; a short walk is rewarded with views of the immense Spencer Glacier.

Source: <https://alaskatours.com/day-tours/glacier-discover-train-guided-walk/>

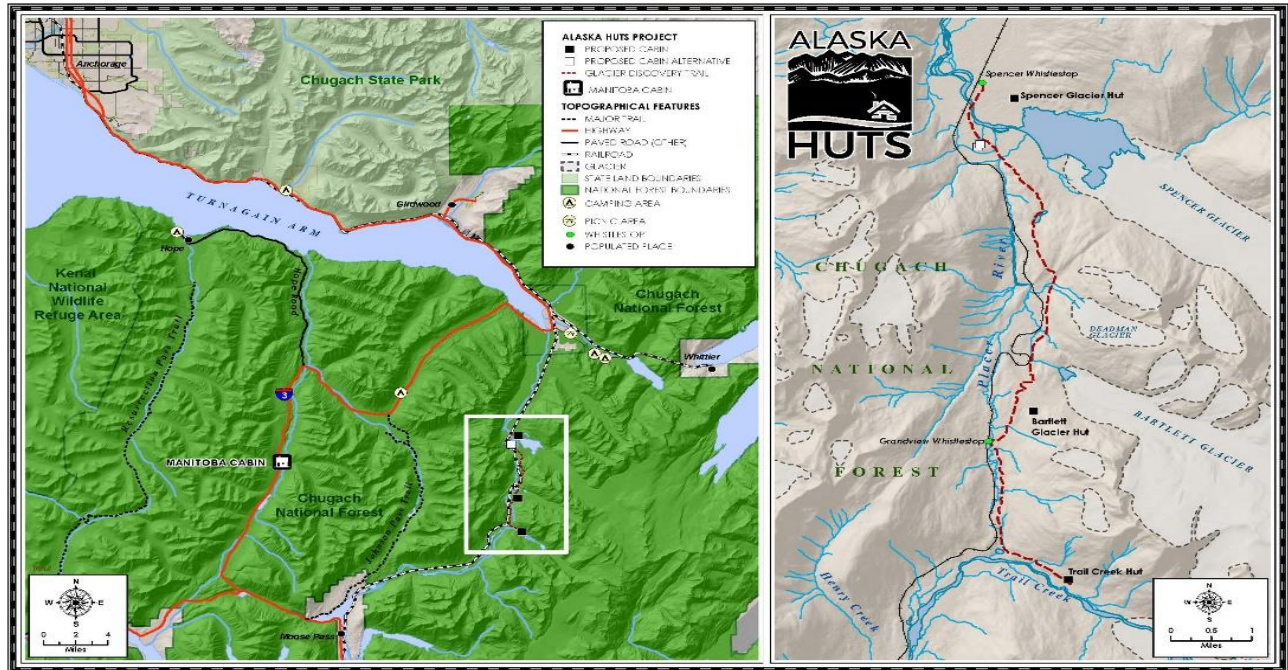


<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Estimated Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
10.5 miles of planned trail construction	US Forest Service is the lead agency and is working in collaboration with the Alaska Railroad Corporation and Alaska Wilderness and Mountain Huts Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connects several constructed miles of highly developed trail between the Spencer and Grandview Whistlestops. - Allows access to a remote area by people who may otherwise not have the skills to travel to such rugged backcountry terrain. - Offers more recreation opportunities by the public and commercial outfitter and guides that operate in the area under US Forest Service permits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logistics of working in a remote and rugged part of the state. - The buildout requires the use of mechanized equipment and heavy use drill and blast operations. 	\$3,412,500	<p>Near Term (Shovel Ready)</p> <p>Multiple partnerships are in place; more investments are needed to fully realize this recreation opportunity.</p>
Two trail bridges	US Forest Service	Connect existing and planned trail segments	Logistics and remote location (engineered truss bridges, helicopter support).	Spencer Gorge bridge \$650,000 Deadman's Creek bridge - \$325,000	<p>Near Term (Shovel Ready)</p> <p>Partnerships in place; Bridge over Spencer Gorge must be constructed first for efficient construction of new trail segments.</p>

*where relevant this column includes background on status

3. GLACIER DISCOVERY HUT SYSTEM

The Glacier Discovery Project is a linked three hut system along the Alaska Railroad’s Whistle Stop corridor in the Kenai Mountains. In Phase I of the Glacier Discovery Project, Alaska Huts Association, an Anchorage-based 501(c)3 non-profit, will work in partnership with the Chugach National Forest and Alaska Railroad to build the 25-bed “Spencer Glacier Lodge” overlooking Spencer Glacier. This strategic location will benefit from infrastructure already placed by the US Forest Service and independent tour operators, including whistle stops, shelters, toilet facilities, well established trails, and a fantastic pedestrian bridge across the Placer River.



In Phase II of the Glacier Discovery Project, Alaska Huts will further develop plans to build two 8-10 bed huts, Bartlett Glacier Hut and Trail Glacier Hut, along the Alaska Railroad’s Whistle Stop Corridor to complete a three-hut system. Bartlett and Trail Glacier Huts will be accessed via the Glacier Discovery Trail, a 30-mile US Forest Service trail currently under construction. Once complete, the trail will connect the Glacier Discovery Hut system and Spencer Glacier, Grandview and Trail Glacier Whistle Stops.

Above: the Vision for Alaska’s first hut to hut system, with huts that offer food, comfort and views of glaciers cutting down between serrated alpine ridge lines. Source: AK Huts

The Glacier Discovery Project will serve a diverse group of outdoor enthusiasts due to its unique location along the Alaska Railroad corridor. Visitors will be able to travel hut-to-hut by riding the train or by hiking the trail—or a mix of both—creating options for an exceptionally diverse group of users. By providing simple but key amenities like heat, cooking stoves, and mattresses, the huts will bring thousands of new visitors of varying backcountry experience into the Kenai Mountains from all over the world, while fostering camaraderie, wilderness education and environmental stewardship.

Getting there is half the fun: riding the AK Railroad opens doors to otherwise remote landscapes, and access for adventure from day hikes to the planned multi-night, hut to hut system.

Source: Alaska Railroad



<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Estimated Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
Phase 1 (Spencer Lodge) & Phase 2 (2 smaller huts): 35% A&E drawings done; Letter of support from US Forest Service and inclusion in the Chugach National Forest Mgt Plan.	Alaska Huts Assoc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide access to backcountry to visitors of diverse abilities - Maximize on the appeal of railroad travel, ease of access, and quintessential AK magnificent setting - Create multi-day hut-to-hut trail system 	Proof of funds for NEPA review; fundraising is a challenge	Phase 1: \$1,032,631 (\$100,000 secured) Phase 2: \$1,075,000 TOTAL: \$2,002,631	Phase 1: Near Term (Shovel Ready) Phase 2: Near Term Planning in progress

*where relevant this column includes background on status



Left: View of Spencer Glacier, from close to the location of existing US Forest Service public use cabin, to be one stop of the planned hut to hut system. Source: USFS



Left Spencer Cabin, perched on the ridgeline high above Spencer Glacier and Lake
 Source: <https://www.alaskastar.com/2016-08-03/mountain-echoes-spencer-lake-cabin-idyllic-getaway>

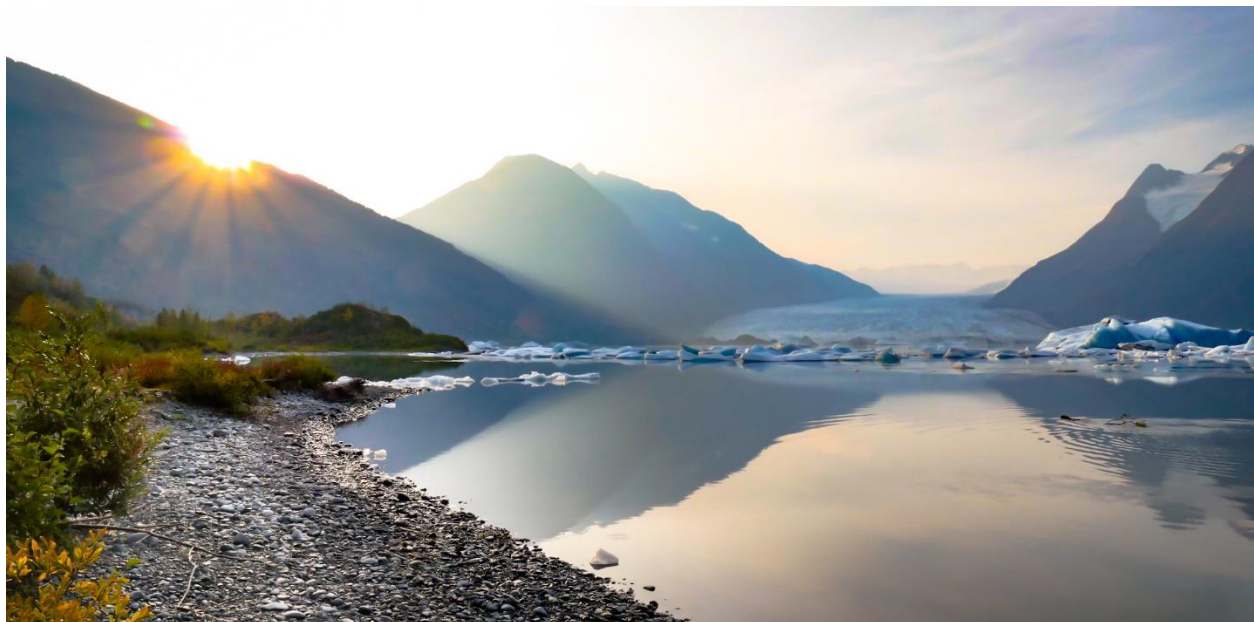
GLACIER DISCOVERY PROJECT

Spencer Glacier Lodge 35% Drawings



**Above: planned Spencer Glacier “hut”- a substantial lodge with capacity for 25 overnight visitors.
Below: Sunrise over Spencer Lake and glacier.**

Source for both: AK Huts Association



4. CHUGACH STATE PARK CONNECTORS

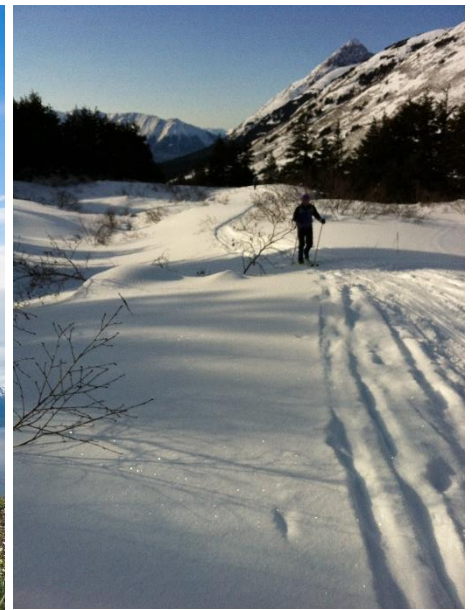
The northern, Chugach State Park section of the Seward to Anchorage Corridor has most of three key trails in place, but significant work is needed to upgrade and maintain these trails. All three of these trails are either part of or off-shoots of the INHT and are maintained by the Chugach State Park, AK DOT, and US military. The proximity of Anchorage creates more visitor traffic in the area, and therefore greater need for diversity, signage and other actions to ensure the safety of available routes. The projects presented here aim to create a continuous and safe trail corridor between Anchorage and Girdwood; make crucial improvements to the section of the INHT between Girdwood and Eagle River; upgrade the underutilized mountain route between Indian and Arctic Valley which is one of the pathways of the historic Iditarod Trail, and fill the gap at Windy where two existing trails almost meet.



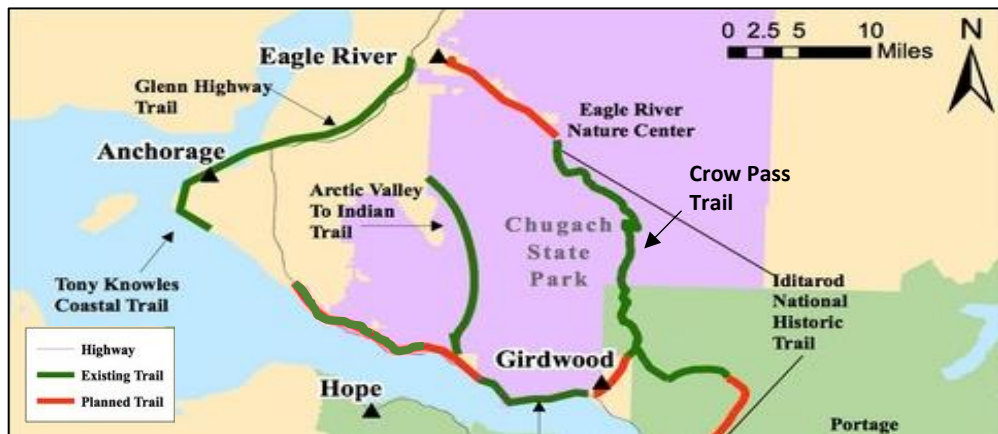
Backpacking on Crow Pass Trail.
Source: Chris Beck



Hiking Turnagain Arm Trail. Source: Jody O Photos, Visit Anchorage



Skiing Arctic to Indian trail.
Source: Chris Beck

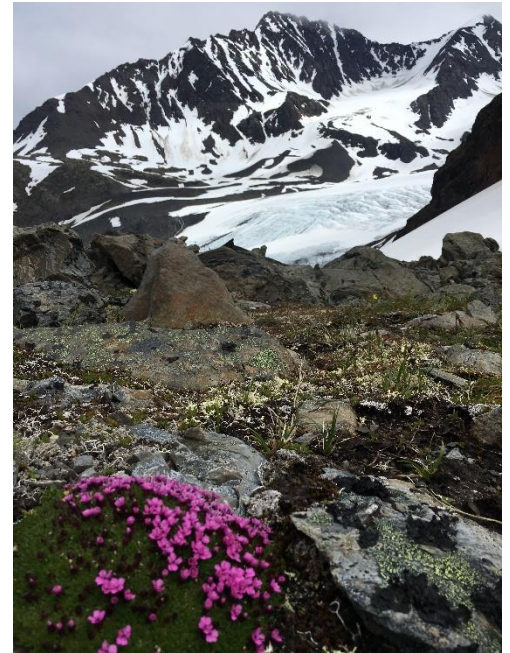


(This map needs to be updated/corrected) Intended caption: **“This map highlights three trails that extend the INHT coming from the south: the Crow Pass Trail from Girdwood to Eagle River Nature Center; the Arctic to Indian route; and the need to fill the gap at Windy Corner, between the ends of the “Gird to Bird” bike trail and the soft surfaced Turnagain Arm Trail.**

Crow Pass Trail

Crow Pass Trail is a 23-mile segment of the Congressionally designated primary route of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The trail crosses through Chugach State park, connecting Girdwood and Eagle River. The trail is a deserving candidate for “signature trail” status – offering a noteworthy hike that is spectacular enough to encourage visitors from afar to visit and spend more time (and money) in Anchorage and Alaska.

Although popular, significant improvements are needed to take full advantage of this trail’s value, and to keep the trail safe and useable by a wide range of hikers, backpackers and packrafters. Recently, the bank along the Eagle River section of the trail has been heavily eroding. Several long segments of the trail have largely disappeared, requiring walkers to use improvised “go around” social trails. Improvements needed include rerouting sections of trail along Eagle River as well as brushing the entire trail for safety reasons. Substituting a bridge for the current thigh-deep ford should also be considered. Wading across the ice-cold glacier river is dangerous and limits use of what would otherwise (with the improvements above) be a trail that appeals to hikers across a wide range of levels of fitness and experience.



Glaciers, stony ice blue ponds, lichen and moss campion make the hike to the top of Crow Pass more than worth the effort. *Source: Chris Beck*

<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
Brushing existing trail, from below the pass to Eagle River, and along Eagle River.	Chugach State Park; Alaska Trail Stewards	Opens up an overgrown trail, making use safer and more enjoyable	Setting up volunteer crews in interior trail sections, may require overnight camps	<\$15,000	Near Term <i>(Shovel Ready)</i>
Rerouting eroding existing trail along Eagle River.	Chugach State Park	Replace eroded sections with safer trail built to sustainable standards.	Some work can be done by volunteers, but a professional crew is needed to complete project	Estimated \$3M	Mid Term - Planning needed

*where relevant this column includes background on status

Exploring Crow Pass where the INHT continues north into Chugach State Park. *Source: Lia Siemens, KMTA*



Arctic to Indian

Arctic to Indian is a popular, increasingly well-known 22-mile winter route. It is a “side/connecting trail” of the INHT system¹ and in Alaska’s early days it was used as a safer winter alternative to Crow Pass. There were once two roadhouses along this trail serving a mail route, freight carriers and other travelers.



While an inviting, enjoyable winter ski, the original trail on the Arctic Valley side (approx. mile 1.5 to mile 9) is completely overgrown and no longer discernable. This forces skiers to travel on creek ice or zigzag through dense trees and brush. Approximately 1.5 miles of this section is covered by dense blowdown and would require a professional crew to cut a corridor. The rest could be brushed and marked without much cost or effort, probably less than a week’s work by a small crew.

The first section of the current trail down to the valley floor from Arctic Valley is on military land and thus outside of direct CSP control. The middle section to Indian Pass, where it exists, is situated in the valley floor with significant water issues. The *2016 CSP Trail Management Plan* includes two proposed new trails (301 Muktuk Marston and 304a Ship Creek Trail), which together would provide a quality, sustainable Class 2 summer trail from Arctic Valley to Indian Creek Pass.

The existing trail from Indian Creek Pass down to the Indian trailhead also has water issues. To create a modern, sustainable trail would require rerouting much of the existing path out of the valley floor onto the hillside. Development of a quality year-round trail would require significant investment but would open up what would certainly be an extraordinarily popular year-round wilderness experience in Anchorage’s back yard.

The existing trail from Indian Creek Pass down to the Indian trailhead also has water issues. To create a modern, sustainable trail would require rerouting much of the existing path out of the valley floor onto the hillside. Development of a quality year-round trail would require significant investment but would open up what would certainly be an extraordinarily popular year-round wilderness experience in Anchorage’s back yard.

<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
Winter route: corridor is overgrown and no longer discernable.	Chugach State Park	Brushing and marking would make it far easier for skiers to follow the route.	Minimal	\$10,000.	Near Term – Planning in progress
Summer trail: Proposed new trail is included in CSP Trails Plan.	Chugach State Park	Creates a four- season trail through beautiful backcountry in Anchorage’s backyard; in a location where summer travel is otherwise very difficult	Will require a professional crew supplemented by volunteers	\$350,000 to \$500,000	Mid Term - Planning needed regarding scope of improvements

*where relevant this column includes background on status

¹ Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan

Potter Marsh-Indian Multiuse Trail (“Windy Corner Turnagain Connector”)



180-degree view from one of many scenic viewpoints along the Turnagain Arm Trail. Source: Chris Beck

A continuous trail from Seward to Anchorage could become a real draw and economic benefit for the communities along the route – but this requires filling the gap at Windy Corner. There are currently two existing popular trails that follow Turnagain Arm between Girdwood and Potter Marsh. Like Arctic to Indian, trails in this corridor are considered “side/connecting trails” of the INHT system. The Turnagain Arm Trail is a soft surface route, traversing above and parallel to the Seward Highway. This route extends from a trailhead on the south side of Potter Marsh to Windy Corner. The paved “Bird to Gird” multiuse trail runs from Girdwood to Indian, in some portions following the route of the old Seward Highway.

The challenge and the opportunity of these two trails is the several mile gap between the terminus of the Turnagain Arm Trail (Seward Hwy MP 106.7) and the terminus of the Bird to Gird trail (Seward Hwy MP 103). The AK State Department of Transportation is currently in the final stages of two projects to improve the Seward Highway in this stretch. Alaska Trails, the CSP Citizen Advisory Board and other groups have urged DOT/PF to include a multi-use paved trail as part of these projects but plans as of March 2020 only include a one-mile extension between MP 103 and 104.

Continuing the paved multiuse trail all the way to Potter Marsh is a long-term goal. The *CSP Management Plan* in the section on *Seward Highway Reconstruction & Scenic Corridor Enhancements* states that the corridor shall be accessible and safely useable by bicyclists and pedestrians. The current *Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan* includes this project as a 12.1-mile new trail (*Coastal Trail – Indian to Potter*). This trail would be an extension of the current Bird to Gird trail that would result in a continuous paved trail between Girdwood and Anchorage.

<i>Project*</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Priority & Status</i>
DOT/PF plans as of March 2020 only include a one-mile extension between MP 103 and 104.	AKDOT/PF; Chugach State Park	Adding multiuse trail during any Seward Hwy reconstruction projects would increase safety for bikers and hikers.	Limited state of AK matching funds has reduced otherwise available federal funding	Cost identified during initial design Estimate \$3 M?	Near Term – Planning in progress (included but then “cost engineered” out of DOT/PF’s original plan)
Extension of a paved bike trail from Indian to Potter Marsh	AKDOT/PF; Chugach State Park		Challenging terrain increases costs	Estimate: \$5 M?	Longer Term – Planning needed

*where relevant this column includes background on status