

# CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST

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CLOSED TO CAMPING



# GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

- The Chugach National Forest has a diverse system of trails spanning the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound and Copper River Delta.
  - Trails accessible by the road system on the Kenai, many leading from communities to interior alpine areas
  - Trails accessible from the ocean in Prince William Sound accessing backcountry cabins and inland areas
  - Fishing and hunting access on Copper River Delta
- Some trails are utilized year-round, others are only summer or only in winter.
- Total Trail Miles: 567 miles
  - Summer trail miles: 426 miles
  - Winter trail miles: 141 miles



- Planned trail miles: 43 miles (INHT and Glacier Discovery Trail)



# GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT (GAOA)

- The Great American Outdoors Act was passed in 2020
- Specifically addresses deferred maintenance on all Chugach National Forest sites and features (not just trails)
- A great asset to address our existing deferred maintenance needs
- FY21 Projects by the numbers -
  - 15 projects on the Chugach Funded - \$3.46M
  - 24 projects on the Tongass Funded - \$8.81M

# WHAT IS OUR CURRENT SITUATION?

- GAOA Project Priority
- Still living in a COVID World – Housing Limitations
- New Budget Modernization across the USFS
- Varies across the Forest – Capacity Concerns
  - CRD - Has experienced a decline in staffing availability in recent years with staff obligated to assume multiple responsibilities. Relies heavily on partnerships and other methods of funding support to complete work.
  - SRD – Has an expansive trail system, but short field season and tough Alaskan climate tend to compound the work needed to fully maintain.
  - GRD – Positioned well for prioritized trail projects, although some will have to be pushed off based on capacity concerns.



# WHAT IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD OF MAINTENANCE?



- Functional crew levels across the Forest
  - Base crew of at least 4-5 (multiple crews pending maintenance needs), able to split to attack smaller projects and combine to address larger maintenance concerns
- Materials, supplies, and replacement of equipment
  - Crews are only as good as the tools they have to complete the mission!
- Brushing requirements
  - Funding does not always allow for maximum brushing on ALL trails every year, can backlog years of work.
- Tier 1 Trails up to standard
  - Heavy use areas require a more aggressive maintenance need and can push off the lower use areas over time.
- Continued use of partnerships to address the trail needs – Absolutely essential, but capacity issues can push this use to the side

# Magnitude of DM – What can be done to help bring existing trails to standard?

- CRD shows that only 47% of ~110 trail miles are up to standard
- Attempt to level out funding streams; find the best option for appropriated allocations across the Forest.
- Can our new Forest Service budget process work better in our favor than in years past?
- Develop performance measures at all Forest Service levels
- Improve temp hiring process and timelines
- GAOA – A blessing and a curse?
- Adjust trail use requirements – Many trails that were heavy on hikers have shifted to increased bike use





# CURRENT STRATEGIES USED NOW TO GET BY?

- Use of partners/volunteers to provide trail crew position gaps (AK Trails, SCA, KMTA, local tribes, etc..) and continue to build these relationships
- Additional funding opportunities – National Forest Foundation, Recreational Trail Program, Federal Lands Access Program, Secure Rural Schools Title II, and of course...GAOA!
- District force account crews to complete as much work as the season will allow – prioritizing at the local level



Questions?

