



NEWSLETTER

JAN
2021

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT GOV. DUNLEAVY'S BUDGET FOR LWCF

ADVOCATE Alaska Trails and our partners are working to ensure Alaska takes full advantage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a generous federal program that provides a one-to-one match for trails and other outdoor recreation investments in Alaska.

With the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, Alaska's potential LWCF share is now expected to double to \$3.5 million each year. We need your help to ensure Alaska does not leave its share of LWCF dollars on the table.

NEXT STEPS: WHAT IT TAKES TO PUT LWCF FUNDS TO WORK IN ALASKA

Governor Dunleavy's recently released budgets include the in-state funding needed for Alaska to access LWCF dollars (<https://tinyurl.com/y8de7o8e>). We need everyone to express support approval of the Governor's budgets by the State Legislature. Four specific actions are needed:

1. Legislative approval of the Governor's Fiscal Year FY 2021 Supplemental Budget. This secures pending 2019 & 2020 LWCF dollars, providing required receipt authority and covering the State's administrative costs and the State's half of the required match (remainder covered by local/tribal governments).
2. Legislative approval of the Governor's FY 2022 Budget (covers same requirements for 2021 LWCF dollars).
3. DNR hires a LWCF grant administrator – fill the unfunded, currently vacant position.
4. DNR & partners carry out the required update of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

WHY IT MATTERS – HOW DOES INVESTING IN OUTDOOR RECREATION BENEFIT ALASKA?

1. Creates jobs and businesses that strengthen local and tribal economies. Employment in Alaska's outdoor recreation industry is sixth highest per capita in the nation.
2. Expands the foundation of Alaska's \$4.5 billion tourism industry. If just half of a typical year's out-of-state visitors spent one more day in Alaska, it would generate an additional \$137M in annual spending.
3. Trail investments support the broader outdoor recreation sector. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation economy provides 2.2% of the total US GDP, larger than commercial fishing, farming, forestry, utilities, or telecommunications.
4. Helps fill the growing gap between our current outdoor infrastructure and the expanding demand for outdoor recreation.
5. Makes it easier for Alaskans to be active outside, improving physical and mental health. Investing in trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure helps grow Alaska's struggling economy and generates more ways for Alaska residents to be active, healthy and happy outside.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: A SCHEDULE FOR ACTION

1. Learn more about the program, so you can be a more effective advocate. See the Alaska Trails website for more detail on the issues and opportunities.
2. Leadership in the Alaska Legislature is still in flux. So the first step is to reach out to your local legislator, and then, in early January, once those decisions are made to reach out to leadership in key legislative committees. In both cases, the goal is to help these legislators better understand the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, and the benefits of securing federal dollars to invest in Alaska's outdoor recreation infrastructure, economy and health.



For more on funding for trails in Alaska see: www.alaska-trails.org/funding-for-trails

Story by Chris Beck; photo from Wikipedia by Paxson Woelber of Milo Lake, Lynx Lake Loop, in the Nancy Lake Canoe System, which has benefited from the LWCF

MAX ROMEY: SHINING A LIGHT ON ALASKA AND ITS TRAILS

Max Romey wants to tell stories about Alaska's world-class trails.

But Max's vision of trails extends beyond pathways and scenery, encompassing places, people, history, health and more. And his stories are not limited to words.



Max, a trail athlete, is an Alaskan multi-media phenom making a name for himself through his watercolor art and outdoor videography. His website has a great description:

A dyslexic Alaskan artist who found his voice through watercolors and film. Max works as an outdoor videographer all over the globe, but his true passion is being on Alaskan trails and in the community that they create.

Max has been involved in the Alaska Long Trail project, which seeks to create a continuous long trail in Alaska. He created a great video about the project that showcases his artistic ability and Alaska's incredible scenic wonders. See it here: www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail

During Alaska Outdoor Alliance's "Confluence AK" in October, Max was featured along with former Alaska Governor Tony Knowles and Chris Beck, Alaska Long Trail manager and former Alaska Trails Board Member, in a presentation about the project. During the presentation Max mentioned that he and some partners had done part of the Alaska Long Trail route. As the editor of both the Alaska Trails newsletter and Interior Trails Newsletter, I was curious. How much had they done? Were they planning on doing the whole thing? Were they documenting their travels?

Read more about Max and his project here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7grc36h>

By Eric Troyer, Alaska Trails newsletter editor; photo from Max Romey website: <http://maxromeyproductions.com/>

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.



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” (www.pickclickgive.org/). To go directly to the Alaska Trails “Pick. Click. Give.” page click here:

www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails

VIRTUAL RACE ACROSS ALASKA BENEFITS YOU AND ALASKA TRAILS

ENTER/DONATE The Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge, a multi-sport challenge, is a great way to get outside while challenging yourself to stay happy and healthy during winter. And you’ll be helping our cause to help build and maintain some of the best trails in the world!

Here’s how it works. You can run, walk, fatbike, indoor bike, XC ski or swim 125 miles, 225 miles, 350 miles, 850 miles, or 2,000 miles. The goal is to log as many miles as you can over the three months of winter, doing any of six sports to get (virtually) from location A to B:

You will have the ability to log your miles, track your progress, collect virtual badges, so how you rank up to others on the leader board daily. You can invite others to this challenge to help you to stay motivated all winter long.



The challenge started on December 21, the first day of winter, and continues through March 20.

The challenge is a fundraiser for the Alaska Trails development of the Alaska Long Trail, too! For every racer that participates, \$10 will be donated to Alaska Trails, plus **racers can donate additional funds to support the development of the Alaska Long Trail.**

The challenge will have occasional pop-up Zoom and/or Zwift free workouts for anyone in the Facebook Race Across Alaska Group: www.facebook.com/groups/824863588292365

To register and find out more see: www.raawc.com/Race/AK/Anchorage/AlaskaChallenge

From Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge website

WITH A NEW YEAR AHEAD, TIME TO LOOK BACK ON THE OLD YEAR

For over 15 years, Alaska Trails has teamed up with partners across the state to build, maintain and advocate for more and better trails. While 2020 didn’t go exactly as planned, we still accomplished a lot. Check out some of the highlights from our year below!

www.alaska-trails.org/2020-highlights

SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Dec 29: Here's some good news - Alaska Trails was happy to be a partner for this KIND delivery. BIG Thanks to KIND and AK State Parks! We are hopeful that we will be handing out these wonderful bars to our volunteers in 2021.

Shared from

Alaska State Parks

Dec 28: We received quite the Holiday gift last week that we will be passing on to our volunteers and partners over the next few months, a whole pallet of Kind bars- that's approximately 5000 bars! 🙌❤️

BIG thanks to Kind for the generous donation, Matson in Alaska for shipping from WA, American Park Network for reaching out and Alaska Trails for facilitating. ✨

Yup, It takes a village.



December 17: It's #ThankfulThursday, and we're incredibly grateful for the support of R&M Consultants, Inc.. R&M's generosity is an inspiration that will motivate us and our work well into the future!

Dec 10: It's #ThankfulThursday and we're grateful for the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation! Thanks to one of their Rapid Response grants, we were able to conduct additional trail maintenance in the Mat-Su Valley, enabling more folks to safely get outside during this crazy year. We're thankful for all the support they provide for outdoor organizations and their commitment to keeping the valley Wild, Accessible, and World-Class!

Dec 3: It's #ThankfulThursday! We're grateful to REI, a long time partner, for their support this year through the 2020 Outdoor Places Grant. This grant helped fund our work on the new Little O'Malley Peak Trail. A big thank you to REI for all their support of our work!



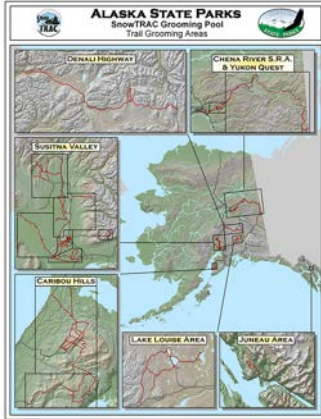
DONATE Dec 1: It's #GivingTuesday and #TrailheadTuesday! Which trailheads did you find yourself frequenting this year? We've always believed in the power of trails, and we know that this year they've provided solace, strength and resilience for our community. GivingTuesday strives to build a world in which the catalytic power of generosity is at the heart of the society we build together. For over 15 years, we have teamed up with partners across the state to build, maintain and advocate for more and better trails. Your support helps us continue working toward connected trail systems, uniting communities and building economies. This GivingTuesday, consider supporting and investing in the trails you love with a **donation to Alaska Trails**: www.alaska-trails.org/donate



STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

WINTER TRAIL GROOMING PROGRAMS NEED YOUR HELP

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



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

Another thing you can do is support the Alaska Snowmachine Trails Program, which provides funds for grooming in several areas of the state. The grooming this program provides benefits more than snowmachiners. Anyone who uses the groomed trails benefits, including fatbikers, skiers, mushers, and hikers. You can't donate to the Snowmachine Trails Program,

but you can help it by making sure to register your snowmachine, which is what funds the program. You can also serve on the SnowTRAC board, which advises the state administration on how the funds are spent. Finally, you can advocate for the program. In years past, administrations have tried to cut the program as part of budget cutting measures. However, strong advocacy has kept the program alive.

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

ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE SETS PRIORITIES FOR NEW YEAR

STATE PRIORITIES

- Stateside LWCF: In 2020, the state forfeited \$615,000 in Land and Water Conservation Fund monies which would have translated into \$1.2 million in outdoor recreation infrastructure. Another \$3 million is in immediate danger. LWCF has helped fund trails, campgrounds, playgrounds, boat launches and more around the state. We need to work with legislators and the Governor to make sure LWCF funding stays in the state and gets put to work to benefit our people, our communities and our sector.
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP): A statewide SCORP is a basic federal requirement for states to receive LWCF funds. These strategic plans must be updated every five years. Alaska's SCORP expires at the end of next year. The state isn't funding the work to update the plan but thankfully, the National Park Service Rivers Trails Conservation Assistance Program is filling in the void. AOA will be working to ensure there is more public involvement than the last time this plan was updated so we end up with a robust strategy for an inclusive and equitable vision for Alaska outdoor recreation for the next five years (2022-2027).
- Focused interest groups forming: Proponents are rallying to amplify their voices on issues related to active transportation and winter recreation. Winter recreation advocacy already under way includes urging the state to restore plowing resources for Turnagain Pass and improving the statewide SnowTRAC program that supports community-based winter trail grooming that is enjoyed not just by snow machiners, but other winter lovers like dog sledgers, fat bikers, and skiers.



FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- AOA Jobs Stimulus Package. The pandemic is not over and our sector and our state still need help to recover. A couple bills in Congress would support the objectives of AOA's jobs stimulus package. We'll be tracking and keeping you informed of ways to support measures including these:
- The CORPS Act. The proposed bi-partisan legislation would expand national service programs significantly to help the country respond to and recover from the public health, economic, and social crises facing the nation in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. Alaska is leading by example, as Juneau, Sitka and Anchorage invested some \$6 million in CARES Act funding to create community-based conservation corps.
- Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act. This bill would simplify and improve permitting processes for guides, outfitters and groups. SOAR revises provisions regarding special recreation use permits for recreational activities on federal recreational lands and waters.
- Challenge Cost-Share appropriations. Each federal land (and ocean) management agency usually has some money to allocate to challenge cost-share grants which create partnerships at the community level to achieve mutual land management goals. AOA has asked appropriations for these grants to be increased as the money directly benefits gateway communities and creates jobs.

If you're interested in keeping informed about issues pertaining to winter recreation email Lee Hart (lee@alaskaventure.org).

GET OUT ON THE TRAILS TO RECREATE BUT DO SO RESPONSIBLY

Are you in the know for snow? At the start of the pandemic in the United States, the #RecreateResponsibly campaign became the go-to resource for how to get outside responsibly. As seasons change, so do our practices to stay safe outside and to protect the places we play.

Winter is a beautiful time, but with the new season comes new challenges and safety considerations to take into account. The winter environment changes quickly and access points may be more limited. We want everyone to be able to enjoy this incredible time

of year, and we want you to stay safe while doing it. Check out these tips to gauge your winter safety awareness, and do your research to #RecreateResponsibly this season.



- Know Before You Go – Some areas can become dangerous with winter conditions. Research your destination, as roads and facilities may be closed in winter.
- Practice Physical Distancing – Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth. When possible, opt to eat and rest outside. If you feel sick, stay home.
- Plan Ahead – Check local conditions and prepare for the elements, packing extra layers, waterproof clothing, and avalanche safety gear for the backcountry.
- Play It Safe – Know your limits and your gear. Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury.
- Explore Locally – Consider exploring locally, as driving and parking may be more challenging in winter. If you travel, be mindful of your impact on Native and local communities.

- Leave No Trace – Did you know that the snow is our water supply? Keep our winter playgrounds clean. Pack out any human or pet waste. Be respectful of the land.
- Build an Inclusive Outdoors – Everyone deserves to experience a winter wonderland. Be an active part of making the outdoors safe, accessible, and welcoming for all identities and abilities.

For more information, including how to spread the message, see: <https://tinyurl.com/y6zlrvc3>

From Winter Wildlands Alliance

SUPPORT STATE, NATIONAL TRAILS BY PURCHASING PARK PASSES

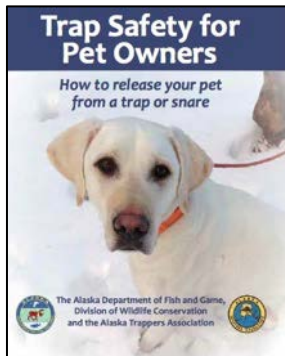
BUY A PASS Many of the great trails in Alaska and the rest of the United States are in state and national parks. Buying a pass helps support these agencies even if you never use the pass. Of course, if you do use the pass, then so much the better. That means you are out having fun!

- Alaska State Parks annual pass: Support state parks during a time of tight state budgets. Permits are \$50 and, of course, your parking is then paid for when you park at a state parks trailhead that requires a fee. Passes are good for the calendar year. Annual boat launch passes are also available for \$100: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes>
- National Park Service annual passes: The park service offers general passes for \$80. It also has a variety of other discounted or free passes for seniors, fourth-graders, people with disabilities, some volunteers, and members of the military: www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm



RESOURCES HELP REDUCE PET/TRAPPING CONFLICTS

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



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

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



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

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Articles on overflow:
 - The first step in extracting your snowmachine from overflow: Avoid overflow: <https://tinyurl.com/yapukw7s>
 - Overflow...It's About Staying out of Trouble: www.sleddogcentral.com/faq/may_overflow.htm

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Finding presence when movement isn't always an option (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/y46zpts>
- 2020-2023 STIP Amendment 1 approved: <https://tinyurl.com/y232rpq3>
- Snare some knowledge about trapping in Alaska and help keep your dog safe out there (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/y39cy59h>
- Disabled veteran camping passes good through Memorial Day 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ajzxc>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

COMMENT SOUGHT ON KACHEMAK BAY PARKS MANAGEMENT PLAN

COMMENT The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public review and comment on a final revision of the Kachemak Bay State Park and Kachemak Bay State Wilderness Park Management Plan.



“The Kachemak Bay region possesses unique wilderness and scenic values that are ecologically important,” said DNR Commissioner Corri A. Feige. “This plan encourages recreational activities on state-managed land in the area, while protecting their unique assets far into the future. Our team has worked very hard with residents and other interested parties to craft a plan that balances diverse interests.”

This “intent-to-adopt” management plan covers Kachemak Bay State Park and Kachemak Bay State Wilderness Park, as well as in the Eveline, Diamond Creek, and Overlook Park state recreation sites, an area totaling

approximately 371,000 acres.

It results from Commissioner Feige’s decision on Dec. 7, 2018 to replace a previous management plan with one produced with more complete public information and involvement.

Two meetings have been scheduled for the public to attend on **January 5**.

See meeting details here: <http://www.dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/kbay/final/2021meetingflyer.pdf>

See updated plan here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/kbay/kbayplan.htm>

To review the plan, go to: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/kbay/kbayplan.htm>. **Comments will be accepted until Friday, Jan. 22, 2021** and can be sent to:

Kachemak Bay State Park Planning
550 W. Seventh Ave, Ste. 1050
Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax: (907) 269-8915
Email: kbsp.comments@alaska.gov

From Department of Natural Resources press release; Eric Troyer photo from Emerald Lake Loop Trail

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

December 4: Snow machine enthusiasts! ❄️🏔️ The trail from Fishhook to the West Gate is open to snow machines starting tomorrow, Saturday, 12/5/20.

Trail updates for all regions are found here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/matsu/fishhooktrl.htm>

ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

December 4: As you get ready for the weekend, take note: Anchorage's mushing trails are in the process of being readied for grooming, and thus, mushing season.

PLEASE stay off designated mushing trails. Sled dog teams are fast, quiet, and unable to stop quickly. To avoid accidents, please stick to trails for humans and pet doggos! You'll know which trails are for dog teams by the designated sign below left.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

December 5: Hot off the press! Anchorage Park Foundation is celebrating 15 years of public service. We appreciate the generous support from individuals like you to keep improving our parks and trails. Click here to see what we have accomplished together: <https://tinyurl.com/ycf184j9>

SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES

December 3: Please don't use the dog sled trails around FNBP for snow biking, walking or skiing. These trails are for dog sleds only. Thanks for your help! For more info, visit the Alaskan Sled Dog and Racing Associations website: <https://asdra.org/index.php/fur-rondy-owc/>

CHUGACH MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDERS

DONATE November 25: We are happy to announce Ben's Bike Playground, a bike park for Mirror Lake! Construction is scheduled for Summer 2021.

Ben's Bike Playground will include a pump track, skills loop and jump lines for beginner and intermediate riders to hone their mountain bike skills.

We have raised over \$160k with a goal of \$215k to fully build this bike park. **Please donate today!**
<https://tinyurl.com/yy78xyep>



MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Dec 21: The Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers volunteers have been hard at work at GPRA widening three bridges to give better access to the single track for their groomers. Thank you for making these trails available to the community year round! The fresh snow up there should make for some great riding this weekend! Get out there and enjoy!



December 14: Looks like a great time to ski Talkeetna Lakes park. All Nordic and multi-use trails are in!

December 1: 2021 Mat-Su Borough Trailhead Parking Passes are now available online at <https://ecommerce.matsugov.us/Pages/CD/AnnualParking.aspx>

VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKERS AND HIKERS

COMMENT Dec 16: Valley Trail Users: We have a new call to action toward saving the Matanuska Greenbelt from a gravel pit: we simply want you to share your favorite greenbelt photo or story with UA Leadership.

This is our way of reminding the University of Alaska that we are still here, we still care about this mission and we DO NOT WANT A GRAVEL PIT in the heart of our precious greenspace! **Click on the button on our call-to-action page to automatically generate an email to UA leadership.**

www.savethematanuskagreenbelt.org



SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Anchorage Parks and Recreation encourages use of multiuse trails: <https://tinyurl.com/y7hlj7gy>
- 2020, A Year of Trails, Parks, and Outdoor Opportunity in the Mat-Su: <https://tinyurl.com/yyona7f8>
- Soldotna's Tsalteshi Trails news:
 - Tsalteshi Trails Granted 10-Year Lease Extension (Soldotna): <https://tinyurl.com/y2q5dsmo>
 - Tsalteshi Trails Looks To The Promise Of 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/ya9ldeky>
 - Holt steps away from Tsalteshi after over 25 years of driving the expansion and refinement of trails: <https://tinyurl.com/yc6gw2xk>
- Hemlock Burn Trail controversy articles
 - City Wilds: A stewardship group is born in the wake of another bike trail controversy: <https://tinyurl.com/yc7bw8zw>
 - The Chugach State Park is for everyone: <https://tinyurl.com/y9d34yag>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Dunleavy administration allows personal watercraft in Kachemak Bay (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/y7c4bgdp>
- Even in winter, the outdoors is giving Alaskans a break from pandemic restrictions: <https://tinyurl.com/y743utfw>
- Gov. Dunleavy says state will reopen key Seward Highway maintenance station this winter (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/ycvca7fy>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

FAIRBANKS PARKS AND REC AGAIN HOLDING TRAILS CHALLENGE

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department is hosting another Winter Trails Challenge.

The sign list was revealed in late December for this popular ongoing event, which is free and open to anyone. Participants have until April 30 to find at least 10 Trails Challenge signs hidden around local trail systems and share their photos with each sign.

This winter's challenge features trails at local recreation areas including Birch Hill, Tanana Lakes, Chena Lake, Skyline Ridge Park, Pearl Creek Nordic Ski Park and more. Five of the trails are ski only, and several are non-motorized, but six are motorized, multi-use, so there is something for everyone.

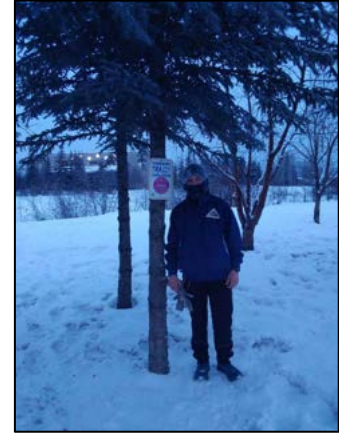
The first person to post a photo the Trails Challenge Facebook Page was Tracey Martinson, who posted on December 21: "Collected sign #1 this morning: Chena River Walk."

Anyone can participate by finding the Trails Challenge signs and sharing their photos on social media using the hashtag "#fnsbtrails" or by emailing their photos to parks@fnsb.us. Anyone who finds at least 10 signs will receive the Trailblazer Award and be entered in a prize drawing. Participants under age 10 need to find at least 5 signs to win the Junior Trailblazer Award.

For more information on this year's challenge, see:

- Trails Challenge page at <https://tinyurl.com/y8mlkkuv>
- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2687304928198988/>
- List of trails and directions to trailheads: <https://tinyurl.com/ybklr6u5>

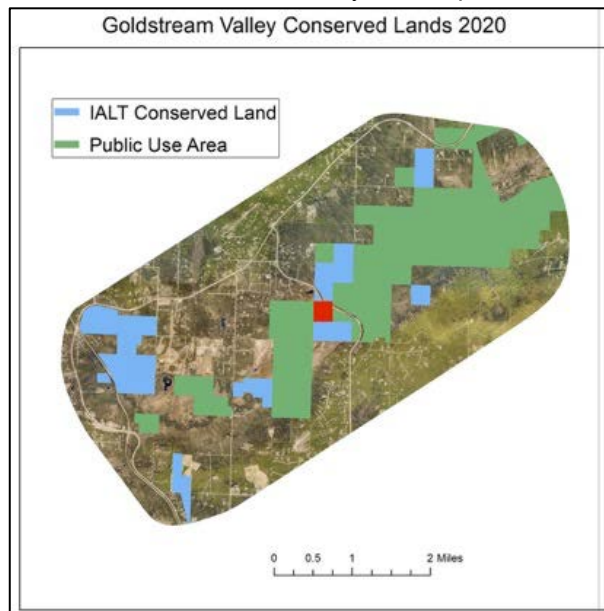
(Photo of Tracey Martinson from Winter Trails Challenge Facebook page.)



LAND TRUST SEEKS DONATIONS TO PRESERVE TRAIL CONNECTIONS

DONATE The Interior Alaska Land Trust is still seeking donations to help preserve critical trail connections in the Goldstream Valley.

The trust was recently able to purchase a critical piece of land -- the 40-acre Steffensen parcel -- in



the Goldstream Valley. (See red square on map.) A trail that connects Goldstream Valley trails on either side of Ballaine Road runs across that land. It is the only place in the valley where the trails connect and cross the road.

The trust plans to keep that parcel, and the trail, open to the public. However, in order to close the sale, the trust had to borrow money from another account. The trust needs to repay that account as well as set aside stewardship funds so it can maintain the property in perpetuity.

The trust is also looking to purchase another piece of property that could help save another critical Goldstream Valley trail section -- where the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail crosses Sheep Creek Road at the railroad tracks near Ann's Greenhouse.

So, if you love Goldstream Valley trails, you've got some good reasons to support the Interior Alaska Land Trust. To find out more about the trust and **how to donate** see: <https://interioraklandtrust.org/>

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

UAF NORTH CAMPUS

December 7: Reminder to the Fairbanks ski community:

Please be sure to wear your mask/face covering when entering the ski hut on the UAF campus. As long as social distancing can be maintained, masks are not required outdoors, however, COVID protocols must be followed when inside the building.

Additionally, if you are unable to social distance, please wait outside the structure until there's room to enter and still maintain 6' of physical distance from anyone who isn't in your household.

Thank you for helping us keep the ski hut open, and the campus safe this winter.

Enjoy your ski time on the UAF trails!

SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS

Stan Justice

Dec 14: Please do not park in the (Fairbanks Golf Course) parking lot (to access the groomed skiing trails on the course)! They have restarted construction (of the lodge) so the gate may be open but their insurance is suspended so no public parking is allowed.

Alternative Access to golf course skiing:

- Henrik Road cul-du-sac - take the ADMA trail around to golf course E gate.
- 7 day Adventist Church - not Sat. mornings during service. Don't block water/oil deliveries.
- Christ Lutheran Church - not Sun. mornings if their services resumes, ski along Farmers Loop sno go trail to gate at 7 Day Adventist.
- Hole in the fence at Ballaine/Farmers Loop intersection.

Thanks!

Comment from Barbara O'Donnell >

Please if you take your dogs-take a clean up bag. I removed 4 large piles at the Seventh Day Adventist fence entrance. That is standard to prevent getting shut down by private property owners complaining of dog crap. It was on the golf course. Thankyou

FAIRBANKS TRAIL USERS OPEN GROUP

Allen Bondurant >

Dec 24: Just a reminder that by this time of winter, ATVs use on our trails is totally incompatible with other trail user groups

Reply by Jacob Buller: And if you, say, drive a 4 wheeler with tracks on it, at least drag a groomer behind you.

BLM-WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

December 10: This video, made by frequent White Mountains visitor Corrine Leistikow, captures why so many of us hold the place near and dear during the holidays! <https://youtu.be/FEeG2PtW8d>

DELTA JUNCTION TRAILS ASSOCIATION

EVENT > FIRST DAY HIKE

Friday, January 1, 2021 at 11 AM AKST – 3 PM AKST

Little Lost Lake, Quartz Lake State Recreational Area

Alaska State Parks and Delta Junction Trails Association encourages the public to join in on January 1st, for a ski/ snowshoe/ hike at Quartz Lake State Recreation Area. This year's hike will start and end at Little Lost Lake. Due to COVID-19, there is no dedicated start time - just show up any time from 11 am to 3 pm. Bring your own snacks and drinks, and stay at least a ski pole distance from others outside your family. We will have warming fires going. This is an all ages event, and sociable pets on a leash are welcome



INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Safety focused resources abound for trappers and trail users (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/y5w74tnk>
- Land trust adds important piece to Goldstream conservation puzzle (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/y3dk8pf4>
- Cache Mountain Cabin with the dogs (Jay Cable blog): <https://tinyurl.com/yd6neggx>
- Delta Junction Trails Association Trails Challenge: <https://tinyurl.com/ya2hnrcr>
- A quick trip to Caribou Bluff... (Jay Cable blog, photos only): <https://tinyurl.com/ybetxp8y>
- Agreement reached to restore Tolovana Hot Spring access near Fairbanks: <https://tinyurl.com/yarqxfcu>
 - Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story: <https://tinyurl.com/y7qof5zp>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- BLM podcast: Interview with Garrett Jones, recreation planner, White Mountains National Recreation Area: www.blm.gov/blog/2020-12-16/podcast-white-mountains-national-recreation-area

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

December 7: Despite the shortening days and dropping temperatures, the Sitka Conservation Society's Community Conservation Corps has been very busy this fall and early winter. In partnership with Sitka Trail Works, Sitka Cycling Club, and Southeast Alaska Independent Living, they have been building a new segment of mountain biking trail along the Sitka Cross Trail.

The new spur, which comes in on the Cross Trail connector behind Sitka High School, connects with two existing MTB trails, Ewok and 907. It is roughly 600 feet in length and, with smaller grades and elevation changes, is well-suited for beginning mountain bikers. This beginner trail will allow community members a safe and approachable entry point for the sport.

Read More Here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9v62rsh>

TRAIL MIX, INC.

December 22: We've got a special one for this #transformationtuesday. Right as our trail crews were wrapping up their season, we received a call from one of our partners about Dan Bishop Aquatic Education Trail.

This trail was built by and for students at Auke Bay Elementary School in the early 1990s along with parents and community members as a place to learn from nature. School staff recently noticed 2 bridges on the trail had reached a tipping point with slippery and rotting wood.

Our team sprung into action and over a weekend, removed and rebuilt both bridges! This was some amazing hustle (although after building 9 bridges on Treadwell Ditch this season, they are pros 😊). Big thanks to Hunter, Duncan, Annie, Kim, and Mark for going above and beyond to ensure safe passage on this trail.



DONATE Dec 17: We don't like to pick favorites, but Treadwell Ditch might just be the crown jewel of our trail system. 👑

As Juneau's longest and flattest trail, it offers 7 access points and recreation opportunities for hunters, hikers, runners, and bikers. We're halfway through its planned restoration, but we need your help to raise the remaining \$24,000 as required by our matching grant. **Donate to the community match fund today** 🙌 bit.ly/treadwellmatch

Huge thanks to our partners ADF&G, Southeast Alaska, Juneau Community Foundation, and Juneau Parks & Recreation.

Dec 15: There's lots of ways to enjoy a trail including just sitting and taking in the scenery. This **#transformationtuesday** features the installation of a new bench on Treadwell Ditch to better experience the serenity of Paris Creek.

This project required building a short trail and pad before flying the bench in and assembling it. Made of concrete, this bench weighs ~500lbs and commemorates Richard Gordon, a birder, hiker, and advocate for our trails. Skip and Lynn Wallen donated the bench and helicopter time in Richard's name.



Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen including Fred, Marc, Dave, Jack, Tom, Kurt, Skip, and Lynn.

Dec 10: The growth of mountain biking in Juneau has been incredible to watch, and we're excited to work with our partners to meet riders' needs. Recently, Trail Mix and Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance discussed with the Forest Service the unsanctioned side trails that have sprung up around Dredge Lake.



The Forest Service, which is the manager of these public lands, recognizes the enthusiasm of this community while at the same time asks MTBers to respect the agency's authority in maintaining these lands (for more info, see JMBA's post).

As part of the work to include riders as a user group in this area, Kate from Trail Mix (pictured), Jack (TM/JMBA), and Craig (JMBA) walked the several miles of single track that branch off the existing Dredge Lake trails with a GPS. Using those coordinates, she will overlay these trails onto the official map, so we can reconvene all parties and discuss a way forward.

Everyone has come to the table with a genuine appreciation for each other and the understanding that all of us want well-maintained trails that allow people to experience what Dredge Lake has to offer. Stay tuned for more on this collaboration in the coming months!

Dec 8: With the high winds and heavy rain last week, some of our trails took a beating. To respond, we've pulled crews off their projects and dispatched them across the Juneau trail system.

They are addressing whatever storm damage they can in the moment, like Julio, Mark and Able clearing this big downed tree on the Kaxdigoowu Héén Dei Trail or the 20+ trees 😞 on Pioneer Road that another crew worked on.

For everything else, they're taking notes so that we can return in the spring. We typically spend the first month of each trail season on winter maintenance, so we're happy to get a bit of a jump on that right now.

Our teams have so far cleared trails Out the Road, in Auke Bay, and in the Valley including

Breadline Bluff, Auke Lake, Kaxdigoowu Héén Dei, Switzer Loop, Under Thunder, Blueberry Trail, and Montana Creek.

If you know of other storm damage we should be aware of, tell us in the comments or DM us a photo! Our teams are continuing to cruise the trails for blowdowns and doing their best to take care of as much as they can.



Dec 3: It's been a wild few days of weather in Juneau with a new 24hr rain record set. The previous record was from 1946!

We want to remind everyone that winter recreation requires greater knowledge of conditions, particularly an assessment of avalanche risk, before you head out.

That's not just for backcountry adventures either. This map of urban snow avalanche paths by Bill Glude shows that trails accessible from downtown are also at risk.

One resource for snow and weather observations in our region is Coastal Alaska Avalanche Center (<https://www.coastalakavalanche.org/>). Building on the work of Bill and others at Southeast Alaska Avalanche Center, CAAC is a new effort to promote avalanche safety and accident prevention. Give them a follow and check out their website for more info.

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- SCS Community Conservation Corps works on another new mountain bike trail in Sitka: <https://tinyurl.com/ybkuac23>

SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Climbing Cross Mountain (Cupola Peak) – Sitka (7 min video): <https://tinyurl.com/yatmzvni>
- **COMMENT (deadline Jan 15)** There's still time to weigh in on plans for the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area: <https://tinyurl.com/ycdjlgpe>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

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

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": www.americantrails.org/communications/newsletter

FUNDING

- Clif Bar Family Foundation grants (for groups, projects; ddline Feb 1, June 1, Oct 1): <http://tinyurl.com/y5es3wjc>

HEALTH

- 11 Minutes of Exercise a Day May Help Counter the Effects of Sitting: <https://tinyurl.com/yxng462r>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- How to Support the Outdoor Destinations and Recreation Areas You Love: <https://tinyurl.com/y4qcad6h>
- Engaging Children in Nature through Trails: <https://tinyurl.com/yxbwrz3t>
- Hiker spends Christmas Eve dressed as an elf on Smokies trails: <https://tinyurl.com/yawt64jk>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- How does walking and cycling help to protect the environment?: <https://tinyurl.com/y9aqfxsw>

The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference the first Tuesday of every other month from 5-7pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us. Members and the public are welcome. Call for more information and meeting details [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049).

A copy of this newsletter will also be posted to our web site. Newsletters come out at the beginning of each month. Deadline for articles is seven days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at fbxtrails@gmail.com