



NEWSLETTER

MAR
2021

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

ALASKA LONG TRAIL INCLUDED IN GOVERNOR'S BOND BILL!

ADVOCATE The Alaska Long Trail is on a fast track!

Gov. Mike Dunleavy's list of infrastructure projects for a \$356 million general obligation bond bill includes \$13.2 million for the Alaska Long Trail. This is not guaranteed, but it is a great step in the right direction down a long trail. The Alaska State Legislature must approve the bond package, so things are expected to change during that process. If the legislature approves the package, then it goes to the voters.

Despite the uncertainty, this is excellent news. The Alaska Long Trail is a relatively recent idea, but it has struck a chord with many interest groups and community leaders, including former Gov. Tony Knowles who in January was named chair of the Advisory Group for the project.

The Alaska Long Trail would create a continuous trail from Seward to Fairbanks by connecting existing trails with new trail segments. Plans are still being worked out, but ideas being discussed include multiple trails and routes in some areas to accommodate a variety of trail users over all seasons. The project has the potential to give a big boost to the visitor industry by creating an iconic adventure similar to other long trails, such as the Appalachian and Pacific Crest trails in the Lower 48, the Great Trail (aka the Trans-Canada Trail), and the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

The Alaska Outdoor Alliance is advocating for this project in a recent newsletter saying, among other things, "Repeat these mantras: Outdoors Means Business. Outdoor Infrastructure is Critical Infrastructure. Outdoor Jobs Get Alaskans Back to Work."

The Alaska Long Trail also has the possibility of integrating with the Trans-Alaska Trail, a project to turn the Trans-Alaska Pipeline access pad into a trail from Valdez to Deadhorse.

If you support the inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail in the bond package, please let your legislators know and please thank Gov. Mike Dunleavy for including it in the package.

- Here's a link to the bill (search for "trail"): <http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Text/32?Hsid=SB0074A>
- Alaska Senate contact info: <http://akleg.gov/senate.php>
- Alaska House contact info: <http://akleg.gov/house.php>
- Gov. Mike Dunleavy contact info: <http://gov.alaska.gov/contact/>

**THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL:
A PATH FOR A STRONGER SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMY**

From the Camino de Santiago in Spain to the Great Himalayan Trail in Nepal, the Inca Trail in Peru to the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails in the United States, long trails have captured the attention of travelers the world over. With some of the most stunning wilderness in the world, Alaska is long overdue in creating a world class long trail of its own. Long trails engage visitors in everything from simple day hikes to multi-week, bucket list lifetime accomplishments. Alaska Trails and its partners are proposing such a route connecting Fairbanks and Seward.

This first 500-mile segment could ultimately expand into a 2000+ mile trail extending north from Fairbanks to the Brooks Range and the North Slope, and south to a future SE Long Trail, following an alluring mix of trails and ferry rides. Many sections of the proposed Alaska Long Trail already exist or are currently planned, and the route is almost entirely on public lands, enormously reducing the complexity and cost of the trail.

It is time for Alaska to invest in its future by creating a route that will stand with the other great long trails of the world.

ALASKA TRAILS

LUNCH AND LEARN

Alaska Outdoor Alliance and Alaska Trails will be holding an informational meeting on **March 10** about the Alaska Long Trail and why it should be included in the general obligation bond bill. This meeting will be held on Zoom from Noon to 1 p.m. Find out how to attend here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7sarudy>

USE “PICK. CLICK. GIVE.” TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS

DONATE Alaska Trails is teaming up with Chugach Chocolates to offer you a sweet incentive to Pick.Click.Give!

All donors to Alaska Trails through Pick.Click.Give will receive a FREE bar from Chugach Chocolates as a thank you for supporting our important trails work. Already donated to Alaska Trails through Pick.Click.Give? – THANK YOU – your bar will be on the way in May! Already filed for your PFD? You can add a donation to by going to the PFD website and clicking on the button that says “Add or Change your Pick.Click.Give. donation.” Still need to file for your PFD? You can do that at the PFD website: <https://pfd.alaska.gov/>



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

(And if you see the Chugach Chocolate bar on the trails, try not to eat it all up!)

SET THE DATE, SEND YOUR IDEAS FOR THE 2021 TRAILS CONFERENCE

SUBMIT, ATTEND The 2021 Annual Trails Conference is happening soon!

The State Trails Conference will happen **April 14-16**.

Registration is now open: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ho97wk>

And we would love to have your ideas! We are seeking proposals for presentations and workshops that showcase best practices in trail construction, trail maintenance, economic development, volunteers, trail design, partnerships, trail benefits and trail-related policy. Help make the conference a great kick-off for the 2021 trail season – and beyond! Send your ideas with “2021 Trails Conference Presentation” in the subject line to office@alaska-trails.org.



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

All this couldn't happen without our wonderful sponsors. We'd especially like to thank Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and Friends of State Parks Mat-Su for sponsoring the 2021 Statewide Trails Conference! If your group or business would like to sponsor the Trails Conference, please e-mail us at: office@alaska-trails.org.

HELP NEEDED FOR ALASKA LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

ADVOCATE The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program that provides 1:1 matching funds to states and local and tribal governments to invest in outdoor recreation – \$3.5M is expected for Alaska in 2021.



Unfortunately, Alaska is lagging behind with acceptance of a total of \$3.4M in LWCF funds for the past two fiscal years. Funds that are not accepted within three years of their allocation are sent back to the federal pool. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), submitted budget requests for LWCF funds for 2019, 2020, and 2021. Fortunately, these requests are included in the Governor Dunleavy's DNR Supplemental Budget (FY2021) and DNR Capital Budget (FY2022). And that's how you can help.

Once the legislature finalizes its leadership structure, advocates will need to urge legislators to approve these budgets and not let millions of potential trail funds go back to the federal pool. Meanwhile, if you have the chance for an informal conversation with legislator who you believe is sympathetic, please use the linked information to help them better understand the issues and benefits for securing LWCF dollars.

To find out how you can help see: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/funding-for-trails>

MORE RECREATIONAL TRAIL FUND GRANTS EXPECTED SOON

We want to share the news we have heard about another Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant round that will begin soon, with at least \$900,000 of additional funds. We expect a formal announcement from State Parks soon and will pass that on when we get it, but wanted to give you a heads up so that you could plan accordingly in case you are interested in applying.

The application period will reportedly be open from early March until April 30. This is a tight timeframe, motivated by the desire of DPOR to make approvals on the applications by August.

For this round, non-motorized and diversified projects can apply for up to \$150,000 and motorized projects can apply for up to \$300,000.

The current application and other information can be downloaded at the DPOR website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Feb 22: Chugach Chocolates is helping us celebrate the Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge by donating 100 bars to racers who meet up with us on Westchester Lagoon on **Friday March 5th!**

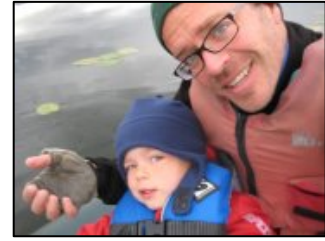
more details at: <https://fb.me/e/46XB7ejOG>

AND we will have to up the amount on this BIG check that the RAAWC will be presenting to Alaska Trails! We are VERY grateful for their support of the Alaska Long Trail project!

EXECUTIVE BOARD HAS OPENINGS FOR INTERESTED PEOPLE

Alaska Trails is always interested in hearing from people who might want to serve as board members. By serving on the board you help guide our group in its mission "to enhance the Alaska trail experience by supporting sustainable, world-renowned trails through advocacy and education." If you would like to run for the board some time in the future please contact us (info on masthead).

DIRECTOR'S CORNER
Steve Cleary, Executive Director



Celebrating Three Big C's: Conference, Chocolate, Contributions

Happy Spring! We are looking for brighter days ahead. Alaska Trails is excited to kick off 2021 with our annual conference. We are embracing the virtual world and will do our best to encourage presenters and attendees from far and near. And we hope you can join us!

Statewide Trails Conference – April 14-16, Virtual

Alaska Trails is excited to once again host its annual Trails Conference, which provides trail users and the wider public a statewide opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals. While the roof we will gather under will be virtual this year, we are still grateful for your attendance.

New and exciting for 2021: The Alaska Long Trail – a progress update and how you can help; Leave No Trace Hot Spot Program – coming to Alaska in 2021; Trail Mapping from the USGS National Digital Trails Project; and Alaska Trails' continued focus on the Economic Benefits of Trails

Still time to give through Pick Click Give – and get CHOCOLATE



Alaska Trails is teaming up with Chugach Chocolates to offer you a sweet incentive to Pick.Click.Give! All donors to Alaska Trails through Pick.Click.Give will receive a FREE bar from Chugach Chocolates as a thank you for supporting our important trails work.

Already donated to Alaska Trails through Pick.Click.Give? THANK YOU. Look for your bar in May! Already filed? You can add a donation to by going to the PFD website and clicking: Add or Change your Pick Click Give donation. Still need to file?

Go to: pfd.alaska.gov and be sure to choose Pick Click Give when prompted.

Alaska Long Trail Contribution

On March 5, Alaska Trails will be the grateful recipient of a generous contribution to its Alaska Long Trail project. The check started at \$10,000 but it will be nearly \$18,000! The Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge is donating \$10 for each of the 1,056 participants in the race. AND racers donated EVEN MORE. We are extremely thankful to Turnagain Training helping us stay active while helping the Alaska Long Trail project.



Despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, a glorious Alaska winter is going to turn into a sunny spring and we hope that you and your loved ones have the opportunity to get out and enjoy Alaska's beauty through your favorites trails – and a couple new ones.

See you on the trails,

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR VOLUNTEER OF YEAR AWARD

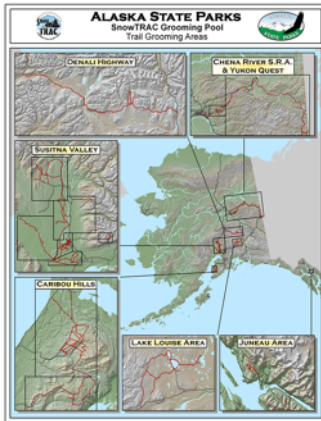
NOMINATE Know of trails volunteer who should be recognized? First Lady Rose Dunleavy has opened nominations for the 2021 First Lady Volunteer of the Year Awards. This annual tradition honors outstanding volunteers from across the state that make a difference in their communities.

Nominations will be accepted through April 30th and can be submitted online at: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/first-lady-volunteer-awards/>

You can also submit nominations using a paper nomination form that are available for pick up at the Governor's offices in Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Palmer.

WINTER TRAIL GROOMING PROGRAMS NEED YOUR HELP

DONATE/SERVE Some of the best of winter is upon us. Longer days, warmer temps! 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 STATE PARKS POSITIONS CAN INCLUDE TRAIL WORK



Alaska State Parks has a variety of seasonal positions through its the Alaska Conservation Corps (ACC), which are paid jobs, and its volunteer program. Tasks will vary and may include trail work, maintenance, fee station, or office work. Most positions begin in late May or early June. Some offices will start recruitment as early as March. You may wish to call the office in the area you wish to work in, to find out what positions they are offering this year and when applications are being accepted. For more information see:

- ACC: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/accinstr.htm>
- Volunteer Program: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/index.htm>

MENTAL HEALTH TRUST LANDS PERMITS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Permits for using Mental Health Trust Authority lands are now available online.

Permits are necessary for all non-commercial, recreational activities on Trust land that include:

- Overnight recreational use (such as camping)
- Motorized use (max. curb weight of 1,500 lbs.)
- Firewood harvest
- Subsistence trapping access
- Aircraft landing



You do NOT need a permit if your non-commercial, non-motorized, recreational use of Trust land is day-use only. Activity must be in compliance with applicable state, federal, and local laws. That includes for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities, such as non-motorized trail use.

To find out more, obtain a permit, and find out the location of Trust lands, click here: <https://alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/landpermits/>. Note: Some lands are closed and the Trust Land Office reserves the right to close other Trust land to public use at any time. For a list of land closures click the link above.

Revenue from permits help support the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, which strives to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries in Alaska.

From the Trust Land Office website

FED AGENCY SEEKS GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS PROJECTS

APPLY The project application period for Federal Lands Access Projects (FLAP) is now open **through March 26**. While non-profit organizations may not apply for projects, there are opportunities for local governments, including tribal entities to apply. There are potential opportunities for trail and trail related facilities. More information about the program and project eligibility can be found here:

<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access/ak>

From Alaska Outdoor Alliance blog post

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

Feb 22: Super stoked Senator Dan Sullivan is co-sponsoring the Active Transportation Safety Through Connectivity Act which would provide \$500 million annually for a federal competitive grant program to help communities and regions build connected active-transportation routes—trails, sidewalks, bikeways and other infrastructure—to ensure people can get where they want to go safely by foot, bike or wheelchair.

February 17: A great public service! ALASKA WILDLIFE ALLIANCE has launched MAP the TRAP. Since there is no central database tracking trap encounters in Alaska, including data on dogs caught in traps, the Alliance seeks to understand the scope and location of frequent trap encounters and collect public input on trap setbacks. <https://www.akwildlife.org/safetrails>

ALASKA STATE PARKS

Feb 27: Did you get your 2021 Day-Use Parking decal yet? March is just around the corner and sunnier days are in our future! 🤩☀️



For \$60, you can park at all Alaska State Parks trailheads that we manage. Exceptions are Arctic Valley and Eagle River Nature Center in the Chugach.

Buy your pass online and print your receipt OR write the date of purchase and receipt number on a piece of paper in marker or thick pen and put that in the spot your decal will go when you receive.

Drivers side windshield, lower left hand corner.

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/fees.htm> Photo Credit: Kate Ayers, Caines Head, "Free"

Feb 19: Please park in designated parking spots and remember to pay your parking fees before you get on the trail! ✅ Parking on the road or double parking in a state parks trailhead lot can result in a ticket of \$70 from ASP or MORE if another entity issues the ticket. Yikes.

As you prepare for your weekend adventures, don't wait until you are up here 🙄 to suddenly wonder if you paid your parking fee or parked in a designated spot. Thanks and have an awesome weekend!

February 6: We were deeply saddened by this news as many of us have had the privilege of working on trails with Shawn Lyons.

His relentless volunteerism, kind heart, tenacity in the hills, and musical genius made him a truly unique person to spend a day with. Not to mention, he was the first to speed hike the twelve tallest peaks in the Chugach front range and look what he started!

His many contributions to the outdoor recreation world are endless. He literally wrote the book on Alaska hiking.



Shawn Lyons will be greatly missed by so many. ❤️

- Renaissance man Shawn Lyons, who wrote the book on Alaska hiking, dies at 66 (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/y5qqo4ye>

STATEWIDE LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- The right tent can make or break a winter trail excursion (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/yyucl44c>
- AOA Asserts Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure IS Critical Infrastructure: <https://tinyurl.com/y8hl52n8>
- Pastimes App Builds Community in Outdoor Recreation: <https://tinyurl.com/y9pp7a35>
- Denali Park road open to Mountain Vista (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/ydyx728l>
- Packraft Field Repair Kit: <https://thingstolucat.com/2020/08/28/packraft-field-repair-kit/>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show/podcast
 - Nordic skiing in Alaska: www.alaskapublic.org/2021/02/05/nordic-skiing-in-alaska/
 - Dirt Work (Christine Byl): <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2021/02/17/dirt-work/>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

ANCHORAGE FOUNDATION OFFERS SCHOOLS ON TRAILS PROGRAM

The Anchorage Park Foundation recently sent this email to it's Schools on Trails partners:

We recently released the latest in our new video series featuring the Schools on Trails program. As Anchorage students return to the classrooms, the timing couldn't be more perfect to celebrate the trails and parks that connect schools and communities. We know when children connect with their environment they will be better stewards of it and be more inspired to learn about the world around them. We are pasting below some verbiage and a link to make sharing super easy on your own pages. We appreciate the support in sharing our mission!

Schools on Trails is designed to get Anchorage students outside. Please share this opportunity to ignite adventurous spirits, encourage a love of learning, and connect students to the environment closest to them.



Here's the video: www.facebook.com/AnchorageParkFoundation/posts/10158147528493121

Photo from Facebook post about Alex Price's class.

The foundation also had a Facebook post that shows the program in action:

Way to go Government Hill Elementary students! Their teacher Alex Price took advantage of our Schools on Trails support kit and got his class outside where they worked on sound maps and participated in sensory activities. Alex says the students were focused, engaged and happy to be outside! Learn more about our program here: <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/schools-trails/>

Find out more about this program here: <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/schools-trails/>

MAT-SU TRAILS, PARKS GROUP ANNOUNCES GET OUTSIDE – MAT-SU!

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation recently announced a new program to help people stay healthy. It's called "Get Outside – Mat-Su!"

Many people opt to stay inside during Alaska's long winters, and with social distancing measures due to Covid-19, many people are finding themselves spending LOTS of time at home. Staying home can lead to decreased physical activity and mental health and increased screen time or unhealthy behaviors. The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation wants to promote outdoor activity and get people to enjoy the many recreation opportunities available in the Mat-Su during March, April, and May!



Participation in the event includes sharing (through Facebook Messenger or Email) a photo, Name/Contact, date, location, and activity. The location must be in the Mat-Su Borough. Participants will be entered into a drawing to receive items from local businesses. Participants may submit and enter into the drawing each month of the virtual event.

Find out more about Get Outside – Mat-Su! here: <https://matsutrails.org/2021/02/18/getoutside/>

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

February 9: After four million gallons of water and nearly 400 hours, the snowmaking has ceased at Kincaid Park. Curious about the process? Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage explains. (Psst: And your membership helps make sure there is plenty of snow for all those great events you love, for as long as possible!) <https://www.anchoragenordicski.com/snowmaking/>

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

Feb 25: A huge thank you to Senator Dan Sullivan for taking action to promote affordable, safe and healthy transportation options. It's an issue that matters in Alaska. The proposed legislation will authorize \$500 million each year for a nationwide network of safe walking and biking routes.

"Alaska's transportation systems are in need of expansion, and building and connecting pedestrian and trail networks is an important part of bringing our infrastructure into the 21st century," said Senator Sullivan. "This legislation will provide opportunities to compete for significant funding to complete and further expand trails like the Moose Loop, while ensuring that pedestrians and bicyclists are able to travel safely within and between communities in our state."

<https://tinyurl.com/yd6ht6xd>

Feb 21: Trail use in Anchorage has been up this past year and that is introducing more people to the infamous Moose Loop. Thanks Alaska's News Source for showcasing this great community resource!

<https://tinyurl.com/y7fvaafs>

Comment by Stephen Sommerfeld

Riding the moose loop for the first time last spring made me absolutely fall in love with anchorage. The parks and green space here is my favorite thing about anchorage and will be what keeps me here! Thanks for all you do!



Feb 19: The weekend is nearly here. The perfect time to meet the Moose Loop. Our four main multi-use trails—the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail, the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, the Campbell Creek Trail, and the Ship Creek Trail—can be connected to each other to form a 32-mile bike loop, an almost-complete urban greenway that is, when viewed on a map, in the shape of a moose! Check it out and try a few miles each weekend or challenge yourself to 32!

Feb 16: "Anchorage boasts hundreds of miles of designated multi-use trails and huge parks that are perfect for snowshoeing and other winter activities."

<https://www.anchorage.net/winter/things-to-do/snowshoeing/>

Feb 11: Tune in today and hear our Executive Director Beth Nordlund talk all things parks and trails in Anchorage.

She sat down with the Pick Click Give Podcast to talk about the heart and mission of the Anchorage Park Foundation. From inclusive parks, Moose Loop and how your donations make it all possible, you won't want to miss!

<https://tinyurl.com/yaek8b7e>

Feb 10: "Staying fit in the winter is hard, but fat bikes make outdoor exercise possible. Not only that, but they provide tough workouts."

In case you need a little motivation to try something new this winter to get you out on those awesome trails!

<https://tinyurl.com/yd4pwpe3>

Feb 8: "Nature, it can be argued, is one of the great regulators – it gets us in touch with our roots (literally!), grounding us in the process, it tickles the senses and teaches, and it offers a perspective you'll never get inside of four walls.

So how can you embrace the helping hand Mother Nature offers?"

Anchorage parks and trails are a great place to start!

<https://tinyurl.com/y9hdgdjt>

February 5: While summer may be a few months away, there is only a few weeks left before Youth Employment in Parks closes their application period. Know a teen or college age student looking for the best summer gig in town? Have them apply with Anchorage Parks and Recreation and help us share.

Apply here: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/YEP.aspx>

Feb 2: Municipal Health Department spokesperson says proposed changes involve multi-use trails where people bike, walk and ski, as well as in local neighborhoods.

<https://tinyurl.com/ybn2y4vc>

ALASKA STATE PARKS

Feb 17: Win-Win Wednesday... By doing your part as a responsible park user, our resources and staff time can be better spent to benefit ALL users.

Win-Win Tip #1: Take a moment to learn more about what IS allowed on our trails, and what the conditions are, by bookmarking this page:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

Snow machine trails in Hatcher Pass are for snow machines, hikers and skiers, not ridiculous large vehicles or or any other motorized vehicles.

We appreciate your cooperation.



Feb 24: Download the free OuterSpatial app and find Alaska State Parks along with Matanuska Borough trails, thanks to Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation and the Mat-Su Borough. 🙌😊



GIS Mapping and user-friendly information at your fingertips can help you get to your cabin or other destination with this easy-to-use app.

We are working to get all of Alaska State Parks trails, cabins and points of interest updated in OS, but all the GIS maps are already available and the Mat-Su area is all set. Download today and tell us what you think!

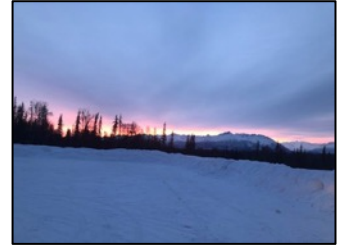
Google Play: <https://tinyurl.com/y9y85j46>

App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/outerspatial/id1254161962>

MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Feb 23: We have hit that magical time of the year when we're gaining about five minutes of daylight every day, the sun actually has heat to it, and there are still really good snow conditions around the Mat Su Borough. This is the time to get out and play! Remember to check our trail conditions at <https://www.matsugov.us/trails>. Have fun and be safe out there!

Picture: Chugach Mountains sunrise from Government Peak Recreation Area parking lot.



ISLAND TRAILS NETWORK IS IN KODIAK, ALASKA.



ENTER Feb 17: Call for film entries, **due March 5th!** Entries will be featured at this year's Kodiak Outdoor Film Festival, Friday, March 12 at the Kodiak Fairgrounds. It will be held outdoors as a drive-in format. No experience required, new material is always encouraged.

This event you wouldn't want to miss!

Check out www.islandtrails.org/film for more details.

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Nominees sought for Kenai River and K-Bay citizen advisory boards: <https://tinyurl.com/y236xfrf>
- Potter Marsh Improvements (**comment deadline March 15**): <http://notice.alaska.gov/201397>
- Ride to Knik Glacier is glorious, but make sure you're fat-bike fit: <https://tinyurl.com/y888lkro>
- Anchorage considers tightening leash law after years of complaints: <https://tinyurl.com/y8b2o7ez>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show/podcast
 - Chugach State Park: <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2021/02/19/chugach-state-park/>
- **COMMENT** Anchorage MATS Non-Motorized Plan open for review **until March 5**: <https://tinyurl.com/y4zm7obe>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

FAIRBANKS RECREATIONAL TRAIL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS STARTS

PARTICIPATE The Fairbanks North Star Borough is updating its Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan and trail users should speak up.

The first public hearing of the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan update has already happened and **another is planned for March 1**.

The meeting will be held via the Zoom platform and starts at 6 p.m. Information on how to join the meeting is in the Trails Advisory Commission meeting agenda (see below). This will be an information gathering session and will be held as a Trails Advisory Commission meeting. It will focus on trails and trail systems east and south of the Steese Highway.

To find out about the meeting, see:

- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/257656252620055>
- Trails Advisory Commission meeting agendas: <https://tinyurl.com/yclutvbe>

The Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan is the primary decision-making tool the borough uses to guide protection and management of local trails. The plan does not get updated often, so changes made now could affect local trails for the next 10 or 20 years. That is why it is so important for trail users to speak up now.

(Note: this update is separate from the Fairbanks/North Pole-area Non-Motorized Plan update that is also happening right now. That is a multi-government effort that is focused mainly on use of roads and associated sidewalks and pathways.)

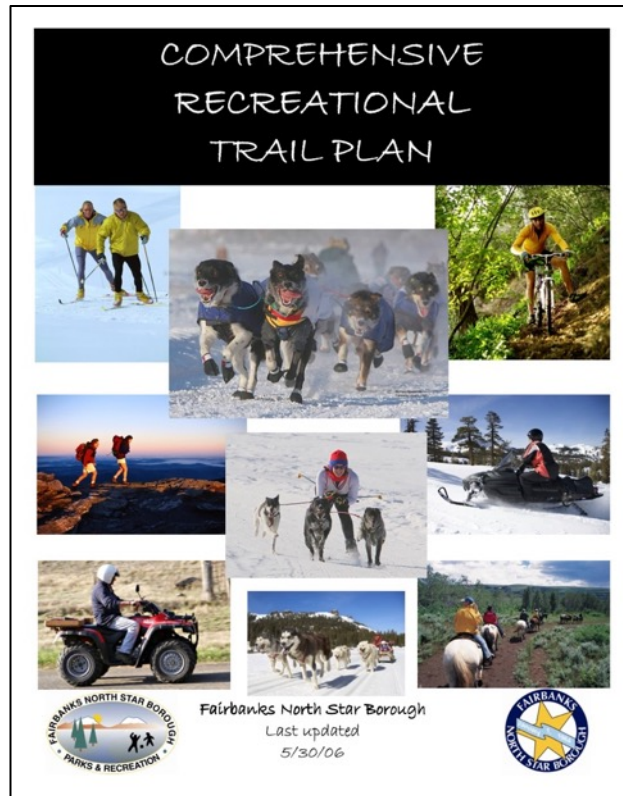
As part of this process, you can address issues with existing trails, such as maintenance, public access, and conflicts among user types. You will also eventually be able to address possibilities of new trails.

This process is just getting started. The main thrust right now is to collect information, including what trails are being used now. Many trails in the borough on the plan, but many are not. If a trail you care about is not on the plan, now is the time to try to get it added. Your advocacy won't guarantee that the trail is protected, but staying silent will guarantee you won't have a say.

R&M Consultants has been hired to help with the update. Money for this project is coming from a federal grant. Unfortunately, the grant has fairly tight deadline, so things have to move fairly quickly. A draft of the plan update needs to be done before the end of the year.

Find out more about the process at the update website: www.FNSBTrailsPlan.com
For questions contact Project Manager Bryant Wright, FNSB Parks & Recreation Bryant.Wright@fnsb.gov

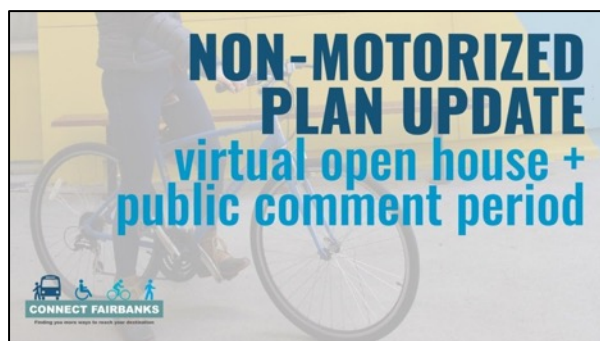
- Here is a KUAC story about the update: <https://tinyurl.com/ycgo8s2q>



COMMENT PERIOD OPEN FOR NON-MOTORIZED PLAN UPDATE

COMMENT Speak up now to have a say in cycling and pedestrian Fairbanks-area infrastructure, including trails, for the next few years.

The Fairbanks area Non-Motorized Plan Update is having a virtual open house and public comment period. **Deadline for comments is March 19.**



This project by the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning (FAST Planning) group seeks to update the plan to guide future infrastructure projects for all forms of transportation that are not motorized. The public comment period is YOUR chance to help guide that plan.

(Note: This is different from the Borough's Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan, which is also being updated now. More on that below.)

You can look at the non-motorized plan here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycad7sth>

The plan itself is large (60MB, 255 pages), but half of that is appendices. It is well-organized by chapters and includes an Executive Summary at the beginning if you don't want to look through the whole thing. There are many projects in the Fairbanks and North Pole area either underway or in the works. Your comments help determine what gets done and what gets priority.

You can comment on the overall plan — a form is available on the front project page — or you can use the Interactive Project Map. With the map you can look at specific areas you care about. You can find out what projects, if any, are planned for that area. And you can make comments about specific projects or about areas that don't have any projects planned. It's pretty easy.

So, if you care about the non-motorized transportation infrastructure in the Fairbanks area, check it out and leave your comments.

- Projects aim to improve nonmotorized routes in Fairbanks (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/ybw9y48j>

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

Feb 18: Share your photo of a local park, recreation facility or recreation fun for a chance to have your photo selected as our Facebook Cover Photo for the week! Entries can be uploaded on this post or emailed to: parks@fnsb.gov.

(Winners drawn randomly each week. Contest runs from February 22-March 22, 2021. Ideal photo dimensions for cover photos are 820x312px.)



FAIRBANKS PADDLERS



Feb 25: Fairbanks Paddlers is hosting the Virtual Edition of the 2021 Paddling Film Festival. Link to the post on our website for tickets and details on how to watch the three different programs: Adrenaline, Culture, and Adventure. <https://www.fairbanks paddlers.org/news/filmfest2021/>

Feb 19: Don and Tracie's Chandalar River Virtual Slideshow was so popular, that we reached our Zoom meeting capacity of 100 participants early in the evening. Some folks were unable to join after we reached our limit. Although we didn't record the meeting, Don and Tracie recorded their narration and shared the presentation to YouTube.

You can watch it on our website or on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/0c7UWn40bnM>

SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS

Samuel Dashevsky

Feb 8: We finally got enough snow on the Old Ski Field to blanket most of the chipper debris from our November brush cutting project.

On Sunday we laid down a number of experimental track patterns (including a dog walking path). We shall see what sort of use pattern evolves.

Check it out !

FAIRBANKS TRAIL USERS

Feb 7: Good News-Miner letter to the editor reminding people to clean up after their dogs at Creamer's Field. Actually, people should clean up after their dogs on all trails (understanding that mushers can't

reasonably do that). For most trails around here just making sure it's tossed off into the woods is fine. That's certainly better than having it sit in the trail, especially when it all starts thawing in the spring.
<https://tinyurl.com/y3s8dsc8>

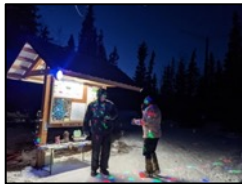
Feb 4: The trail that goes up to the gold mine from Smallwood creek / Gay gulch area has been completely destroyed this morning by a couple of miners with a dozer. I confronted them with questions regarding a permit to destroy this trail that dog mushers, snowmachiners, and trappers use & maintain. Supposedly they said they have a permit. I'm currently working with BLM, Alaska state forestry, and department of natural resources on further information. They are extremely helpful and working to solve this issue. I will post updates when possible, and if anyone would like to politely cast their voice against this I will leave a contact number next post with more information. Thanks everyone, be safe out there 🙌



UAF NANOOK RECREATION

Feb 17: Thinking about doing a cabin trip this spring break or on the weekend? Cabin trips are a great way to get out in the winter without having to full-blown winter camp in tents. The interior has many options as far as public use cabins go. Our Lower Angel Creek Cabin Trip Plan tells you everything you need to know about executing this trip! Check out our video for great resources! You can rent most of the gear you need from the Outdoor Adventures office.
https://media.uaf.edu/media/t/1_xr69fqab/164225612

DELTA JUNCTION TRAILS ASSOCIATION



February 14: Last night at the Liewer Community Trail 61+ lighted up folks came out for the annual DJTA Walk of Lights! Around 200 ice lanterns struggled to shelter the candles from the infamous "Delta Winds". Their flickering light still guided us through the mystical woods. Thanks to the many volunteers that helped make this a really fun community event.

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- The Winter Trails Challenge is on: It's the perfect excuse to get outdoors: <https://tinyurl.com/ycpyvkah>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Fatbike paradise: Miles of hard-packed trails, little snow open up the Interior for winter riders: <https://tinyurl.com/y3q5hlxs>
- BLM Podcast: White Mountains Safety: www.blm.gov/blog/2021-02-18/podcast-white-mountains-safety

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

TRAIL MIX, INC.

Feb 25: Do you hike, ski, ride, or snowmachine in the mountains in winter? University of Alaska Southeast and Alaska Pacific University want to hear from you!

The goal of the Winter Backcountry Travel Survey is to learn more about how Alaskans behave with regard to safety, especially avalanche safety. This short survey will take only 5-10min so what are you waiting for? >>>>

<https://forms.gle/VZ6A2ymnruCaaTPXA>

Questions? Email Glenn Daniel Wright at gdwright@alaska.edu

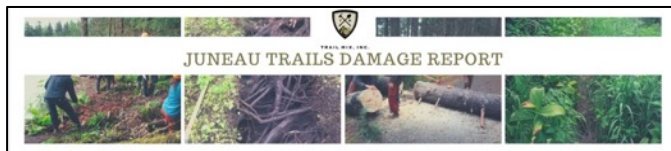


Pictured is Death Valley up on the Icefield looking back at Split Thumb towards Juneau. Courtesy Glenn Daniel Wright.

Feb 23: Are you getting your winter hike on? Check out this informative guide for advice on everything from gear to trip planning to navigation and safety. <https://tinyurl.com/ycqgmvla>

Feb 12: You like being on the trails. We like fixing trails. It's a match made in heaven.

That's why we're excited to roll out the Juneau Trails Damage Report. This report is designed so that we are able to get your input on what trails need our attention.



How it works:

1. Get out on the trails! If you notice something like a fallen tree over the trail, a broken bridge, or other hazardous trail conditions take a picture.
2. Go to our website (link on website coming soon!), or click this link: [Bit.ly/juneautrailsreport](https://bit.ly/juneautrailsreport) to fill out the form.
3. Try to be as detailed as possible so that we can find and address the issue as quickly as possible.
4. That's it! Give yourself a pat on the back for helping maintain Juneau's Trails.

SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

Feb 16: What do you think about building a coastal trail between Kanga and Big Bay?

In the landmark 2003 Sitka Trail Plan, community members called for more coastal trails and identified a route between Kanga Bay along the coastline past Goddard, south to Big Bay, looping back through the muskegs. With a few new shelters, this could be a 3-4 day backpacking loop.

In the fall, the Sitka Conservation Society's Community Corps and some local trail experts scouted the route and wrote up a review. Check it out and let us know what you think!

The proposal is merely in a conceptual phase right now and has not been endorsed or formally reviewed by the land management agencies.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7o7ujsy>



Feb 12: An update on Harbor Mountain Road access from our partners at the USFS Sitka Ranger District:

""Beginning 2/13/2021 for as long as the conditions allow, ATVs will be allowed past Gate 3 on Harbor Mountain Road. However, the Forest Service has noticed significant damage caused by irresponsible riding between Gates 0 and 3.

The expectations for ATV riders include responsible use of Federal Lands and if these activities continue past Gate 3 then the road will be closed to all ATV traffic for the remainder of the winter.

If you are an ATV rider and see someone undertaking actions that are harmful to the Forest please educate them on responsible use and warn them that their activities may end up negatively affecting all riders."

February 2: Snow! Harbor Mountain is a great place to play in the frozen precipitation right now. The gate is closed to highway vehicles at the bottom parking lot, one mile up from HPR. Without cars on the road, it's a lovely family friendly stroll.

ATVs are currently allowed up to the 3rd gate, at milepost 3.6. Until there is a foot of snow over frozen ground at the top of the mountain, which there isn't yet, the road past the 3rd gate is closed to all motorized traffic.

Updates and more details available here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/about-forest/districts/>



SOUTHEAST LINKS

- State Board of Forestry plans Feb. 23 teleconference meeting (includes presentation on Tongass sustainable trails projects): <https://tinyurl.com/y5gg8bx2>
- SCS Community Conservation Corps Brings Jobs, Recreation Benefits to Sitka: <https://tinyurl.com/y8mk2v8p>
- The Dirt (February - Juneau's Trail Mix newsletter): <https://trailmixinc.salsalabs.org/thedirtfebruary21>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SUBMIT YOUR TRAILS MOVE PEOPLE PROJECTS SURVEY

SUBMIT Between May 13 and 30, 2020, American Trails conducted the first "Shovel-ready" survey in attempt to document the contribution the trails community can make to the American economic response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The group received a tremendous response showing over 1,000 trail projects ready and waiting. Now, after a year of COVID-19 American Trails is launching a second survey.

The purpose of this survey is to quantify the capacity of the trails community to build, maintain, and develop trails now, and to provide input to the Departments of Agriculture and Interior process for prioritizing and awarding Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding.

The survey asks about shovel-ready trail projects that, if funding were available and working conditions are safe, could be begun by the next summer and completed by the end of the 2025 federal FY. The survey asks about trail project name, location, approximate budget, and a limited number of other key project characteristics.

Read more here: www.americantrails.org/resources/trails-move-people-projects

From American Trails website

BECOME A AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY VOLUNTEER CREW LEADER

VOLUNTEER The success of the American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations program depends on hard working and dedicated volunteers. If you are interested in taking on a more active role during your next Volunteer Vacation and contributing your leadership skills and personality to help fellow crew members, consider being an American Hiking Society Crew Leader.

AHS Crew Leaders act as liaisons between the AHS office, the project host, and the crew. You do not need to be an expert trail builder to take on the role of Crew Leader, but you do need to have prior group volunteer experience, have good communication and organizational skills, and be a flexible team player.

Join this important endeavor to improve trails, inspire the next generation of trail stewards, and ensure a memorable experience for all volunteers!

For more see: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/crew-leader-information/>

From the American Hiking Society website

COURSE SHOWS HOW FRIENDS GROUPS HELP PARKS

Looking to learn more about working with Friend's Groups? Sign up for this pre-recorded course to understand more about partnerships between park agencies and 3rd party park groups. These park groups can range from a small, passionate friends group with no budget all of the way to a major, well organized, conservancy that raises capital for a specific project or specific park.

This topic is timely especially with Covid-19 because there is huge demand on our parks right now and many park agencies are turning to partners to provide additional services like maintenance or capital raising. City budgets are being constrained and park departments are being asked to do more with less. Park Partnerships can be messy and time consuming. They don't have to be that way. You can get started on the right foot and have an effective partner. American Trails will be offering learning credits. (Note: this course costs \$99.) Learn more: <https://lnkd.in/g4yyxbe>

From American Trails Facebook page

REGISTER NOW FOR VIRTUAL HIKE THE HILL 2021

REGISTER In 2021, due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, trail organizations and partners from across the nation will come together VIRTUALLY to advocate for legislation, learn about new policies, and meet with federal partners, elected officials and their staff, and fellow trail organizations. Join American Hiking Society and the Partnership for the National Trails System for this annual event, which will be held March 8-26, 2021. Find out more at: <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/#hike-the-hill>

From American Hiking Society's Paperless Trail

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 **June 1**, Oct 1): <http://tinyurl.com/y5es3wjc>
- National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partner Funding (**deadline March 26**): <https://tinyurl.com/ycfe7fwl>
- Federal Highway Administration funding chart (has trails-related categories) - <http://tinyurl.com/zqz2m8p>

VOLUNTEER

- American Hiking Society: 2021 Volunteer Vacations and COVID-19 Update: <https://tinyurl.com/y3nr9a4o>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- As Colorado backcountry use soars, Vail Pass' fee model could be a way to manage the crush: <https://tinyurl.com/yxqn6ax3>
- Five Iconic Trails Under 50 Miles: <https://tinyurl.com/yd9j9ocu>
- Book Review of Journeys North: The Pacific Crest Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/ybg2f6cm>
- 2020 NRT Photo Contest Winners Announced: <https://tinyurl.com/yd6ns4gg>
- Interested in an OHV Great Trails Workshop in Your Area? Learn More: <https://tinyurl.com/y7v5cehu>
- Important Updates Regarding the International Trails Symposium: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ocytdt>
- Hawaii Proposes Way To Penalize Hikers Who Ignore Trail Closures: <https://tinyurl.com/ybj34xql>
- Example of an Adopt-A-Trail Handbook: www.americantrails.org/resources/adopt-a-trail-handbook

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Interior Announces Plans to Strengthen LWCF: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ekglod>
- "Campfire Stories" anthology seeks submissions (**deadline June 1**): <https://tinyurl.com/y99ye25c>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- 17 of the Greatest Walking Trails Around the World: <https://tinyurl.com/yxukwoec>

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