



NEWSLETTER

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www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THE 2021 TRAILS CONFERENCE

ATTEND Registration is open for the 2021 Annual Trails Conference!

The State Trails Conference will happen virtually **April 14-16**. Registration is now open:

<https://tinyurl.com/y7ho97wk>.

Highlights for this year's virtual Conference include:

- Mapping presentation by the USGS National Digital Trails Project
- Alaska Long Trail progress update and working groups
- Trail Funding opportunities
- SCORP Regional Working Groups meeting
- Volunteer Success Stories and Project Updates from around the state
- Alaska Long Trail and other statewide projects progress updates

See all the sessions here: <https://tinyurl.com/s4y3vf>

The trails conference brings together trail builders, non-profits, government agencies, and trail advocates of all types so that they can 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 in one place. 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.

For more information on the conference see: www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference



ALASKA LONG TRAIL GETS BIG DONATION, INCLUDED IN BOND BILL

ADVOCATE The Alaska Long Trail project is moving along and getting lots of great support.

We'd particularly like to thank Turnagain Training, which ran the Virtual Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge. For every racer that participated, \$10 was donated to Alaska Trails, plus racers were able to donate additional funds to support the development of the Alaska Long Trail. More than 1,000 people took up the challenge and the effort brought in almost \$20,000 for the Alaska Long Trail!



In addition to that, 10 Alaska Long Trail projects (aka "Fairbanks to Seward Multi-Use Recreation Trail Construction") are in the proposed general obligation bond package, introduced by Gov. Dunleavy, which is working its way through Alaska State Senate committees. Thank you to everyone who has testified or sent in comments of support.

Here is a sampling of the great projects compiled by our statewide coalition:

- Nenana - Fairbanks trail connections (Fairbanks North Star Borough)
- Antler Creek - new trailhead and trail (Denali Borough)
- Government Peak Recreation Area - Skeetawk trail connections (Mat-Su Borough)
- Crow Pass trail upgrades (Anchorage municipality / Chugach State Park)

Learn more about these projects and the current status of the G.O bond at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/go-bond-2021>

The bond proposal recently passed out of the State Senate Transportation Committee. However, some senators are expressing doubt that it will pass out of the Senate because of new federal COVID relief funds coming to the state. The state will be getting more than \$1 billion from the latest federal aid package and President Biden and Congress are talking about passing a large infrastructure bill that could bring even more funding to Alaska. This possible influx of funds has some senators wondering if the state should go into debt by borrowing for infrastructure projects. We will keep you updated.

G.O. BOND PROJECTS (\$13.2M total)

- Fairbanks Equinox Trail** – securing easements, constructing a new section of trail on Ester Dome, and building trailheads; connects to the Nenana-Fairbanks segment. **\$1.2M**
- Isberg 4-Season Trail Connections** – 4 miles of trail hardening for all-season use and trailhead construction. *Fairbanks North Star Borough & local trail partners.* **\$1.2M**
- Nenana-Fairbanks** - 18 new miles of recreational multi-use trails through Tanana Valley State Forest, linking existing forest roads. *State & local trail partners.* **\$1.6M**
- Antler Creek** – New parking area and restroom, with short easy loop trail, leading to a longer more adventurous route up to Denali National Park; second phase is planning for a related ATV/hiking trail system north to Otto Lake. **\$0.5M**
- McKinley Village/Mile 231** – Pedestrian bridge over the Nenana River, connecting to lodging and commercial uses, new parking, and new trails to the north. *This and Antler Creek above are joint projects of Denali Borough, AK DOT/PF, NPS.* **\$2.2M**
- Government Peak Recreation Area to Skeetawk Ski area Connector Trail** – a new 12-mile connection. *Mat-Su Borough/Mat-Su Trails & Park Foundation* **\$1.9M**
- Coastal Trail to Ship Creek** – A long sought for connection filling the gap between two major Anchorage Trails. *Municipality of Anchorage* **\$0.8M**
- Crow Pass-Eagle River Trail** – Upgrades and bridges on a trail of statewide significance that is washing into Eagle River. *Chugach State Park* **\$1.3M**
- Turnagain Arm Trail Connection** – Filling the short gap in the trail system from Girdwood to Anchorage. *Chugach State Park* **\$0.3M**
- "Southern Trek" of the Iditarod National Historic Trail** – Two bridges and a new trailhead on the route from Seward to Girdwood. *USFS, AK DOT/PF* **\$2.2M**

Whatever the outcome, inclusion in the bond package has really spurred the Alaska Long Trail project along, getting people organized and plans laid out. Even if the bond package is not passed, the project will be in better shape to take advantage of future funding.

If you support passage of the bond package and its inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail projects, please let your legislators know and please thank Gov. Mike Dunleavy for including them 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/>

HELP SECURE TRAIL FUNDING THROUGH LWCF

ADVOCATE The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal 1:1 match program which has funded over 350 outdoor recreation projects in Alaska, and it now needs our help. Starting in 2021, the Alaska's share of the LWCF is increasing to \$2.5M each year, thanks to the Great American Outdoors Act. Alaska cannot afford to turn away these critical outdoor recreation dollars that would double state and local investments for trails, boat launches, playgrounds, and more. Now is the time to reach out to your state legislators and urge them to keep the LWCF in the FY2021 Supplemental and FY2022 Capital state budgets.

Learn more, including how to contact your legislators, at: www.alaska-trails.org/funding-for-trails

ALASKA NEEDS TO CLAIM ITS ANNUAL \$2.5M OF LWCF!
This is the amount confirmed for 2021 and going forward.

LWCF is a 1:1 matching federal grant program for outdoor projects

TELL OUR LEGISLATORS TO KEEP LWCF IN ALASKA'S BUDGET

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

KAREN KROMREY, MARK SPANO JOIN THE ALASKA TRAILS BOARD

Alaska Trails is please to announce two new board members. We are grateful for their willingness to serve and look forward to adding their energy and enthusiasm to the board and the organization as a whole. Read about all our amazing board members at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/board-staff>

Karen Kromrey

Karen grew up in Colorado hiking and backpacking with her family. She attended Colorado State



University where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management. Karen worked for the USDA Forest Service for the next 35 years in Colorado and Alaska in a variety of resource areas including vegetation management, special use administration, and recreation planning. She retired from the USDA Forest Service in August 2020 where she was the Recreation Program Manager for the Chugach National Forest.

Karen met her husband, Mark, here in Alaska in the early 1990s and they raised their two wonderful daughters while living in the small town of Moose Pass.

In retirement, Karen enjoys hiking and biking trails across Alaska and would like to stay involved in keeping trails available for all generations to use and enjoy.

Mark Spano

Mark's volunteer involvement with trails began after he retired from a 30-year career in water quality, environmental compliance, and water/wastewater utility operations. He has been active in the Alaska Trail Stewards and served two terms on the Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board along with doing other trail volunteer work.

Mark grew up mostly in Idaho, earned a biology degree, and headed north to Alaska in 1981. He enjoys the Alaska outdoors through boating, biking, skiing and hiking. Mark wants to help fulfill the Alaska Trails mission and he has the additional lofty goal of getting the Trail Stewards' tools resharpened.



ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILERS READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



As you start planning trail building and maintenance projects, remember that Alaska Trails has mobile tool caches available to loan to organized trail groups in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. One cache is in the Fairbanks area and the other is in Anchorage/Mat-Su Valley area.

The trailers have a bunch of trail tools including McLeods, Pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much, much more. If you would like to borrow one of the caches, please contact us (info on masthead).

SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

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

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

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

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



An alternative to using trails in the spring is to get out on foot or by bike and go explore quiet subdivision roads new to you. You get to be outside, be active, and probably find out new things about your community.

Photo: Erosion on a popular trail in the Chugach State Park as seen on September 9, 2020 (Lex Treinen/Alaska Public Media)

SEEN RECENTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

March 25: Got my second vaccine shot today. Hoping for brighter days ahead and we are doing our best to plan safe volunteer events this summer and are currently working on a mitigation plan with: <https://plansaferevents.com/>. Stay tuned for more info on volunteer events this summer!

March 19: Alaska Trails is delighted to announce that the Alaska Recreation and Park Association is sponsoring the 2021 Statewide Trails Conference! ARPA brings recreation professionals together from all across the state to improve all the great things they do for their communities. We are grateful for their support. If your group or business would like to sponsor the Trails Conference, please e-mail us at: office@alaska-trails.org

March 18: Nicolette Dent will join a panel at our Trails Conference to present on the Anchorage Parks and Recreation COVID-19 Survey Results which was based on 1,469 responses. Trails have been important during the pandemic and we are grateful to have this insightful study on the conference agenda.

More conference information at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference>

March 1: A great article on the economic benefits and business opportunities for trails in AK - especially the Long Trail: <https://digital.akbizmag.com/issue/march-2021/attractions-gaining-traction/>

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION WOULD BOOST RTP FUNDING

ADVOCATE You can help increase one of the biggest sources for trails funding in Alaska.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) brings in critical funding for recreational trails for all seasons in Alaska. It has provided funding for recreational trail development and maintenance for more than 500 state projects. In Alaska, the RTP has funded hiking, biking, OHV, snowmachine, paddling and multi-use trails. The RTP is funded by a portion of the fuel tax attributed to snowmobile and OHV usage, but it also funds non-motorized trails on federal, state, local, and tribal lands. Worthy project proposals greatly exceed Alaska's share of current RTP funding, so more funding would be welcome.

You can help by sending letters to our representatives in Congress. The Alaska Outdoor Alliance has a letter template and links to contact our representatives. Read more here:

<https://tinyurl.com/576n36uz>

American Trails also has an article on this bipartisan legislation introduced by representatives Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and John Curtis (R-Utah). Read that article here: <https://tinyurl.com/junrn8uv>

From Alaska Outdoor Alliance and American Trails articles

ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE OFFERS FREE ADVOCACY KIT

ADVOCATE Though they got off to a slow start, the Alaska legislature is in full swing pouring over budgets, mulling the general obligation bond package, and so much more. Have you talked to your legislator lately? There is no time like the present to contact your legislator and let them know outdoor recreation is not just a nice-to-have, it's an essential need-to-have for the economic, physical and mental wellness of all Alaskans.

AOA has created, and recently added to, a simple toolkit you can use to learn about the issues and talking points you can use to convince legislators to say yes to budgets and measures that support the outdoor recreation sector. See it here: <https://tinyurl.com/3bzvm4s4> (Pro tip: open is the "Toolkit Guide" file first.)

Please take a few minutes to call your legislators, as soon as possible, to let them hear a chorus of outdoor voices.



From Alaska Outdoor Alliance newsletter

Donate to the Alaska Outdoor Alliance here: <https://tinyurl.com/z553k2zx>

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM: ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

APPLY The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) is excited to announce that we are accepting a second round of grant applications for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in FY2021! Eligible applicants include non-profit, educational institutions, state government, local government, federal government and native corporations or tribal governments.

The DPOR administers Alaska's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) RTP grant. The DPOR offers this competitive, reimbursable, matching trail grant for maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects. The RTP grant program provides up to 90% matching assistance for the cost of a project.

DPOR anticipates that \$1 million may be awarded to eligible Alaskan projects in this second grant round. The DPOR will be accepting all categories of projects this year, to include Stipulations 1, 2, & 3 projects.

Motorized projects are encouraged to apply! Safety and Education projects cannot be considered for Round #2 – RTP Grant Round, due to time constraints to complete project per 23 U.S.C. § 206(d)(2)(G).

If you are interested in applying for an RTP award, please visit our website at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>. The application packages for the second grant round have been available since March 1, 2021.

Mandatory Public Notice must be posted by March 30. Applications are due by April 30, 2021. If you have any questions or concerns, please email us at Parks.RTPGrantApp@alaska.gov.

WATCH FOR BIRD NESTS WHEN WORKING ON TRAILS

Trail work sometimes requires downing trees or clearing shrubs. When doing so make sure not to violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which makes it illegal for anyone to “take” migratory birds, their eggs, feathers, or nests. “Take” includes destroying or damaging active bird nests or eggs. Different areas of the state have different sensitive periods generally occurring between April 15 and July 25. However, if you encounter an active nest at any time leave it in place and protected until young hatch and depart. “Active” is indicated by intact eggs, live chicks, or the presence of an adult on the nest.



For more information and recommended time periods for avoiding vegetation clearing see: <https://tinyurl.com/y9ulmffg>

Photo from Denali 101: www.denali101.com/denalinationalpark/birds_of_denali.html

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>

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.

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

March 18: We have seen an increase in pet-related concerns across the state.



Please help by controlling your pets at ALL TIMES. To avoid a ticket of \$50-\$70, keep your pet(s) on a leash until you are far from the trailhead. Per 11 AAC 12.130 (a) - ...”a person may not have a dog or other pet in a developed facility of a state park unless the dog or other pet is on a leash not exceeding nine feet in length, and is under control by a person at all times.”

While on trail, maintain control of your pet or keep him/her on a leash. **This includes taking care of your pet's waste by bagging it and putting it in a trash can or taking it with you.**

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep our parks clean and safe for ALL users.

March 12: Don't forget to get your 2021 Day-use Parking Decal or pay a Day-use parking fee before you hit up the parks this weekend!

State Parks relies on fees to supplement our operating budget. This money goes to helping ensure we are able to keep our facilities open and safe for YOU. We have seen an increase in parking citations across the state so please remember, to avoid \$70 citation from one of our Law Enforcement Rangers, pay your fee. For less than cost of a citation you could buy an annual parking pass!

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

Refer to Regulation 11 AAC 12.250 www.akleg.gov/basis/aac.asp - 11.12.250



Photo Bill Sherwonit, Wolverine Peak in the Chugach

March 10: Alaska State Parks Ambassador, Kate Ayers, and her family made the trek to Nancy Lake Cabin #3 recently. Check out her photos and story in our recent blog:

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

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Finding Safety In Shelter Along The Iditarod Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/yan8kgm>
- Podcast: Iditarod, The Trail You Thought You Knew: <https://tinyurl.com/34rvwptu>
- A skier's perspective on the 2021 Iditarod Trail Invitational (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/ymsbnjf2>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Alaska Outdoor Alliance 2020 Wins Fuel Momentum: <https://tinyurl.com/y7yw3md6>
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure is Critical Infrastructure: <https://tinyurl.com/ybgj6nzn>
- Div of Parks and Outdoor Rec Director's Orders Regarding Fees: <http://notice.alaska.gov/201724>
- When Stupid Meets Bear Spray: Just Another Life Lesson: <https://tinyurl.com/58v5625d>
- Snowmachines, four-wheelers allowed on roads under proposal (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/ye2347fa>
- Dunleavy tells feds Alaska taking management of 800,000 miles of river: <https://tinyurl.com/6htxrd3w>
- Covid campers boost state park visits to record numbers in 2020: <https://tinyurl.com/aknh5yez>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show/podcast: Emotional intelligence in the outdoors: <https://tinyurl.com/y8dvtatbe>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHCENTRAL FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

March 19: ****Mat-Su update****

We continue to get reports and have observations of deep overflow on the lakes, especially the Nancy Lake SRA. Numerous people have become stuck in the slushy overflow, with some calling 911 for emergency assistance.



If traveling across lakes on a snowmachine, it is strongly advised to stay on packed trails and anticipate overflow. Skiers have been stranded as well. Be prepared for self rescue and snowmachine retrieval. Travel with a partner, spread out, bring emergency supplies, tow strap or rope, and fully charged cell

phone or communication device. Stay safe!

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

March 5: ****Accessible ASP Trails**** Denise and her daughter Mikayla checked out the Eagle River Nature Center (ERNC) trails recently and enjoyed the trails for the accessibility:

"The trail is wide and groomed in the winter making it very easy to use ski's on our jogger stroller. Polar Stroller just came out with skis that fit standard wheelchairs making it even easier and more affordable for people with disabilities to get outdoors in the winter.

There is a large hill in the beginning that can be difficult if pushing an adult. In the summer there is a lower level parking area allowing us to bypass the hill but it's closed in the winter. My daughter is able to walk short distances so I had her walk that portion. There are several trails to explore such as the Albert Loop Trail that we were able to make it around the 3 mile loop, but the trail condition was difficult to maneuver.

Usually, we stick with the Rodak Loop which is about a mile long loop but has some spectacular views. There are some roots that stick out and the hill but other than that the trail is great. During the right time in the summer you can see salmon swimming in the streams. When we go to ERNC, we usually do the Rodak Loop and continue down the Cross Pass Trail a bit."

Thanks to ASP Ambassadors, Denise and Mikayla Laflamme! 😊



CHUGACH STATE PARK - CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

March 23: Muktuk Marston is the latest Alaska Trails project slated for design in the #chugachstatepark. It will serve as a connecting trail from Arctic Valley trailhead to Hunter Pass to the Upper South Fork Eagle River trailhead, running along the western aspect of the Rendezvous Ridgeline while overlooking Ship Creek Valley 📸

Fundraising of the \$180,000 needed for construction cost is being done through The Alaska Community Foundation.

The recreational trails program (RTP) grant application process is asking that comments on the RTP application be sent to the contact information provided in the RTP Grant Notice in the attachment. For more details, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/hbs7npte>

Please feel free to reach out with your comments and questions.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

March 25: "We're trying to figure out a route that benefits everyone that revitalizes downtown and makes the connection to this Tony Knowles Coastal Trail at Elderberry Park."

Proposition 6 would go to help 13 parks around Anchorage: <https://tinyurl.com/3hprpbpn>

March 25: Anchorage has one of the best urban trail systems in the country, with hundreds of miles of paved multi-use trails connecting neighborhoods, parks, and businesses across the city. Linking existing trails and city streets forms a 32-mile urban greenway loop in the shape of a moose! Use this map to plan your next close-to-home adventure and learn more about your city by exploring someplace new. <https://tinyurl.com/mby83th7>

ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

March 22: This cold spring is perfect for hitting Anchorage's multi-use trails on a kicksled. Meet Val from Kicksled Alaska in our latest YouTube Outdoor Discovery Series video!

<https://youtu.be/fldGjsVbgTs>

MOSELEY SPORTS CENTER

March 12: ***NEW***

The APU Jim Mahaffey Trail System is now designated as MULTI-USE. Please visit our website for more information. (Link Below.) Happy Trails and enjoy all this fresh snow!

Do you enjoy all the fabulous grooming? Please consider a donation to our partner NSAA.

<https://www.anchoragenordicski.com/membership/>

Trail Etiquette: www.alaskapacific.edu/campus-life/moseley/facilities/jim-mahaffey-trail-system/

MAT-SU TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION

March 1: Join us in celebrating all of the wonderful outdoor opportunities in the Mat-Su, and get a chance to win some awesome prizes by entering the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation "Get Outside - Mat-Su" Photo Challenge.

Participation in the event includes sharing a photo, name, 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 (March, April, and May) of the virtual event. Submit your photo entries to the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation on Facebook Messenger or email to traftery@matsutrails.org.

Learn more about the challenge, and how to enter at <https://matsutrails.org/2021/02/18/getoutside/>



Download the OuterSpatial trails app to access over 3200 miles of local trails, and featured content to inspire you to get outside and play! We will be posting a variety of activities on OuterSpatial throughout the challenge. Don't miss out on your next outdoor adventure!

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

Google Play - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

Thank you to Alaska Chicks, All Seasons Clothing Company, AlaskiWear, Knik River Lodge, Turkey Red, Moose's Tooth, 17th-Dog / Alaskan Husky Adventures, and Wild Scoops for donating such wonderful prizes to the photo challenge!

If you are a local business interested in donating small items for this challenge, please email us at traftery@matsutrails.org.

MAT-SU BOROUGH RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES



March 22: Spring is in the air and snow is still on the ground. What a great time of the year! The MSB Grooming Crew will continue to groom the trails until there's no snow left to groom. This is a wonderful time to get out onto the trails and get some vitamin D straight from the source. Here's a picture of our Ginzugroomer working to make some nice corduroy on the Lazy Mountain Nordic Trails.

SINGLETRACK ADVOCATES is asking for donations

March 17: 10 years ago STA set out to design and build the Kincaid multi use trails. Fast forward to today and we are grooming 17 miles of multi use trail in Kincaid Park for everyone to enjoy. Thank you to Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, Alaska Mining and Diving - AMDS, our volunteers, our supporters, and everyone who has donated along the way. Your continued donations allows us to help support outdoor recreation in Anchorage.



March 17: **Help us stop rogue tree cutting at Hillside.** An unauthorized person is going way too far limbing many of the trees on our trails. If you know who this person is, please tell them to stop. You can also message us and we can approach them. All maintenance activities on the STA trails need to be approved by STA. If you would like to volunteer with us please sign up on our website under Trail Crew. Thanks

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- There's plenty to experience on a night-ski at Hatcher Pass: <https://tinyurl.com/ygd56jj6>
- Petition to reject the Anchorage Non-Motorized Plan: <https://tinyurl.com/yjp8xgwg>
- Anchorage Park Foundation spring newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/zwscxary>
- **VOTE** 2021 Parks Bond: Prop 6 (**deadline to vote: April 6**): <https://tinyurl.com/3t35rwft>
- Grantee Highlight: Machtetanz Elementary Outdoor Learning Cart: <https://tinyurl.com/3vd8uha2>

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

MINING COMPANY TO EXPLORE PORTION OF ESTER DOME

COMMENT A geology business, Millrock Resources, will be exploring a portion of Ester Dome this year, which may affect some trails in the area, though the company is saying it is aware of and will protect the trails.

The work could start as early as April and will continue through the autumn. The area identified is near the top of Ester Dome, to the north and west of the towers.

According to the company: "Planned work programs include shallow test drilling with a light drill rig, soil sampling and geophysical surveys. Upon successful completion of the initial programs, reverse circulation drilling with a larger rig may be done. Our aim is to execute a work program that has limited impact on local stakeholders and local trails."

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner did a story on exploration. A spokesperson from Millrock told the News-Miner: "We may want to make new trails where we want to drill. We would be very careful not to damage existing trails and there may be opportunities for us to improve some trails if it made sense."

See News-Miner story here: <https://tinyurl.com/3937dnse>

Millrock is working with Felix Gold, an Australian based company.

The exploration work requires a permit, for which Millrock has applied. Public Notice for the permit application will be posted shortly by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/pubnotfrm.htm>. People can also contact the DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water at 907/451-2736 or dnr.fbx.mining@alaska.gov

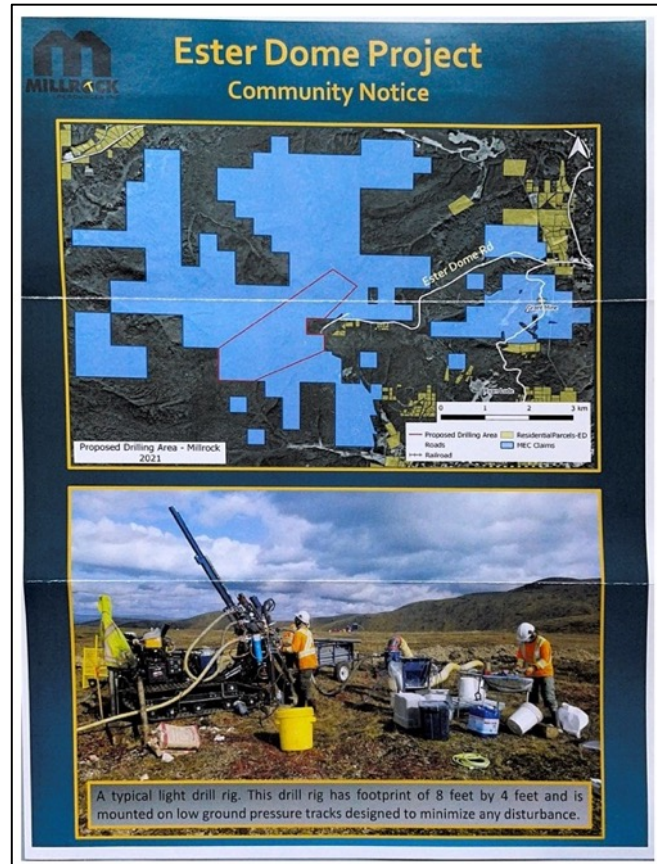
Millrock encourages people to comment to DNR or contact Millrock directly about the work.

"We want to hear your input and stay directly engaged with community members," the company stated on a flyer sent to Ester Dome residents.

Millrock can be contacted by emailing info@millrockresources.com or by calling our Fairbanks office at 907/328-2289. Messages will be forwarded to Project Geologist Ryan Rostad who will respond as soon as possible.

Millrock has also acquired rights to explore in the Treasure Creek area north of Old Murphy Dome Road, which also has several trails. See a story about both projects here: <https://tinyurl.com/3b5uckjk>

There is also quite a bit of discussion about this on the Fairbanks Trail Users Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1654728164805164/>



AGENCIES, GROUPS PLAN WORK TO REPAIR PINNELL TRAIL

VOLUNTEER Plans to rehabilitate the Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail near Eagle Summit are underway.

The Bureau of Land Management recently held a stakeholder meeting to discuss the rehabilitation plans. A variety of people attended including concerned citizens, local hiking and trails groups, BLM personnel, University of Alaska Fairbanks scientists, and representatives from two State of Alaska agencies: the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Fish and Game.

Considerable damage was done to the trail and its environs near Eagle Summit by off-highway vehicles during the first few days of the August-September Fortymile Caribou Herd hunt. You can read more about what happened here: <https://tinyurl.com/nuv33ey3>

According to BLM Park Ranger Teri Balsler the approach to repairing the damage will be three-pronged: repair the damage, take steps to stop future damage, and improve education to all area users about the trail. One aspect of the education has already taken place. It was pointed out last fall that a good map of the Pinnell Mountain Trail was not easily available online, so that people unfamiliar with the trail would know where it is. BLM now has such a map online. See it here: <https://tinyurl.com/3k9fh7ur>

About a half-mile of trail will be repaired. ATVs drove on about 1.5 miles of the non-motorized trail, but some sections of trail cross hardened ground and do not need to be repaired. Reparations to the trail will include raking down ruts, redirecting water, adding drainage, and installing boardwalk to elevate hikers from the wet tundra.

About 1.75 acres of tundra will be rehabilitated. Rehabilitating the tundra will include smoothing out ruts, diverting water to prevent erosion, and seeding to promote vegetation growth. Once the work is done, UAF scientists and others will monitor how the rehabilitation is progressing. More than eight acres of tundra was damaged along the trail. In some areas, that damage extends beyond the trail's 100-foot non-motorized easement.

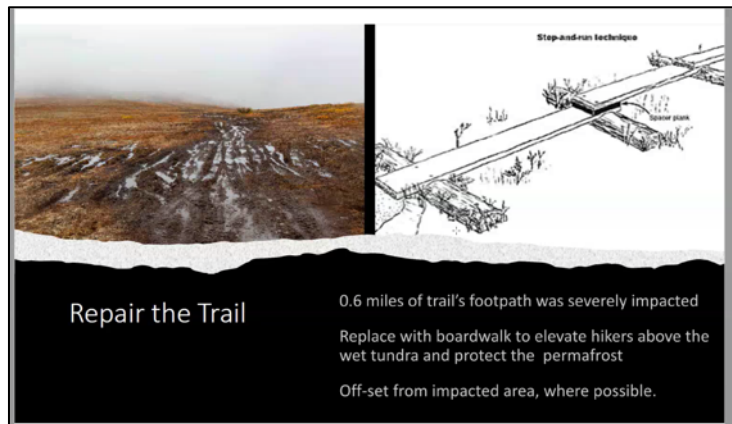
Land outside the easement is owned by the State of Alaska and ATVs are not prohibited there. The state has no plans to rehabilitate that tundra.

Work on the rehabilitation is planned to start in June with a work party on the weekend of June 5-6, the

same weekend as National Trails Day. **The Fairbanks Area Hiking Club is involved and has created a Facebook Event as a way to get people interested in volunteering.** See the Event here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/490071025317969>

A Student Conservation Association crew will then continue work for the next few weeks, with one more volunteer work party tentatively scheduled for June 26. All events will have COVID-19 mitigation protocols.

The trail will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year of being designated as a National Recreation Trail. It is the only land-based NRT in Interior Alaska.



INTERACTIVE MAP FOR FAIRBANKS TRAILS PLAN UPDATE GOES LIVE

PARTICIPATE Trail advocates can now comment on the Fairbanks Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan using an interactive map.

A map has been in the works for the update and was recently activated. According to the Fairbanks Borough Parks and Recreation Department, "You can use different maps depending on your preference: one is more detailed and complex, and the other more simple. Don't hesitate to contact the planning team directly if you need help sharing feedback."

See the map here: <https://tinyurl.com/pmpey3vu>

The Fairbanks Borough Trails Advisory Commission will hold a Zoom meeting April 5 starting at 6 p.m. to discuss the trail plan update, as well as other business. See a meeting agenda, as well as instructions on how to join the meeting, can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2bdx7nb7>

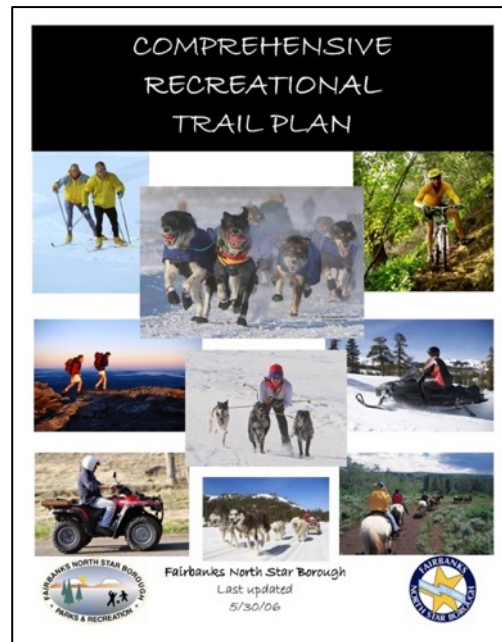
The Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan is the primary decision-making tool the borough uses to guide protection and management of local trails. The plan does not get updated often, so changes made now could affect local trails for the next 10 or 20 years. That is why it is so important for trail users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

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 are 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 a 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



ADVOCATES SHOULD REMIND MAYOR, ASSEMBLY OF TRAIL BENEFITS

COMMENT Borough Mayor Bryce Ward and his administration are in the process of developing a budget for the next year. Please remind the mayor how important trails are to our community.

Mayor Ward and his administration have made it easier to understand the budget process. They have created a page all about the borough budget. See it here: <https://www.fnsb.gov/896/Budget>. (KUAC has a story about it here: <https://fm.kuac.org/post/spring-budget-time-fnsb>).

The mayor will be presenting the budget to the Fairbanks Borough Assembly on April 8. In May, after the assembly has had some work sessions on the budget, the public will have a chance to comment. One way to help maintain our borough trails is to make sure the Parks and Recreation Department has a healthy budget, especially one that continues to include a full-time trails coordinator.

INPUT SOUGHT FOR CHENA LAKE RECREATION AREA SURVEY

TAKE THE SURVEY The Fairbanks North Star Borough Department of Parks and Recreation will be applying for grant funding to improve the Chena Lake Recreation Area. The department would like to know:

- How many users of the park are current or retired service members
- How you use the park
- What would make you use the park more

This online survey will be **open until June 30**. Staff will also be talking to users in the park during the months of March and June. Take the survey here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8xe5f9y>

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS TRAIL USERS OPEN GROUP

March 8: One auto shop in town is reporting that there have been several catalytic converter thefts off parked cars recently. One of them was at a trailhead. This is good to be aware of.

<https://metropolitangarage.com/the-mechanics-point-of-view/>

FAIRBANKS AREA HIKING CLUB FAN PAGE

March 20: A heads up to folks hiking to Castner and a reminder to anyone who doesn't know the meaning of "If you pack it in, You pack it out" –

We went to Castner last Friday and found that at some point somebody had set a fire and taken a dump *inside the glacier* and left it. Toilet paper and all. Just past the point where you'd be able to see it with the daylight coming in through the cave entrance.

If that person is in this group (which I tend to doubt) - you're either selfish, disgusting or both. Maybe you're a rebellious teen who thought it was hilarious. Maybe you expected your mom to come clean it up for you, I don't know. If you are in this group, and since you're such a fecal fan, I hope all your toilets back up and cover your floor in a nice sheen of your own putrid sewage.

For everyone else - brings headlamps in case this becomes a trend. My kids tend to crawl on the glacier floor rather than duck, and this would've been an absolute freak out.

Also - pick up after your dogs if you bring them.

SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS

SEND EMAIL March 23: Sometime last week DOT buried this section of the Skarland trail. I have complained to them numerous times. They have done it as early as December so guess I should be happy they waited until near the end of ski season - but I am not. There are places where snow melts, runs out on the road causing an icy spot - not the case here as the road is crowned. There are places where snow berms causes sight distance problems - not the case here. The off road clearing serves no purpose. **Please send a quick email to the head of DOT's Northern region.** ryan.anderson@alaska.gov Thanks.

The Skarland Ski Trail used to be on the W side of Ballaine Road but when DOT reworked the intersection a Farmers Loop they pushed Ballaine to the West eliminating the old trail. The did put in a path on the E side of the road so the ski trail moved to the path. But it is only useful if DOT leaves it alone!

In the draft non-motorized plan there is a project to rebuild the Ballaine path. Maybe as part of the project they can install jersey barrier to keep snow plows off the ski trail.



DONALD WADE > FAIRBANKS SNOW TRAVELERS

March 28: Well if anyone wants to ride to Gillmore trail from end of Gillmore to Smallwood trail you really can't anymore. Miners moved in and graded road to complete dirt and ruined any opportunity to pass. Good luck time to make another trail to bypass in the future. Went through it Friday.

FAIRBANKS PADDLERS

March 23: Last week's crowd-sourced virtual show with 15 different paddling experiences was recorded and is now available on the Fairbanks Paddlers website and on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84G54cmwEKw>

March 2: Last Thursday night's Tikchik River presentation by John Morack was very well received. About 65 households tuned in by Zoom. For those of you who missed the show, or if your bandwidth creating viewing quality difficulties, you can now view the recording of the presentation.

The presentation can be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/Q7OBwGyG484?t=28>

The presentation is also now embedded in the updated post announcing the presentation on the Fairbanks Paddler's website.

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- The Winter Trails Challenge is still active through April 30: <https://tinyurl.com/f97u6r9c>
- Project to build a Chena River Walk on the north bank is in doubt (FDNM): <https://tinyurl.com/7k4xb56>
- Eric and Corrine's Excellent Birthday Adventure (biking in the Whites): <https://tinyurl.com/vazufddx>
- Public meeting April 1 on grant to connect Bonanza Creek forestry roads: <http://notice.alaska.gov/201950>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Steele Creek: History In The Heart Of The Alaska's Fortymile Region: <https://tinyurl.com/9n7r4932>

SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON ANGOON'S DANGER POINT TRAIL PROJECT

COMMENT Comments are **due April 3** on the NEPA Scoping for the Danger Point Trail Reconstruction in Angoon. mile of a pedestrian trail, locally referred to as the 'Danger Point Trail'.

The Danger Point Trail is 1-mile long, total, with the first ½-mile of the trail beginning near the Russian Orthodox Church and ending at the City's cemetery site. This section of the Danger Point Trail was constructed as a 6'-wide gravel pedestrian trail. The second ½-mile of the Danger Point Trail, which begins at the cemetery site and continues to the northern-most end of the Danger Point Peninsula, is presently an undeveloped, narrow earthen path.

This project proposes to reconstruct the second undeveloped ½-mile of the Danger Point Trail to a condition similar to the first ½-mile of the trail (6'-wide, gravel surfaced pedestrian trail). The City has enlisted the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to act as the 'lead federal agency' for this proposed project, and has contracted with KAE, Inc. to assist the community in meeting its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) obligations regarding this project, as this trail would terminate near the boundary of public lands.

For more information or to submit comments, contact Mr. Cyrus B. Randelia, KAE, Inc. Project Manager, at (907) 276-2126 or email cbr@kuskoae.com.

From What's Up? by Peg Tileston

SEEN RECENTLY ON SOUTHEAST FACEBOOK PAGES

SITKA TRAIL WORKS, INC.

March 19: New trailhead under construction! Sitka Trail Works foreman Troy Bayne and the crew are building the parking lot off HPR for the connector trail to the latest Cross Trail extension.

Phase 6 of the Cross Trail, from Harbor Mountain Road to Starrigavan is under active construction now. To help us build on schedule, please stay off the trail for now to avoid impeding the heavy machine and tree falling.

Thanks for all your support!!

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Help Sitka Cycling Club build more single-track trails this year: <https://tinyurl.com/j6sxyvik>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

NATIONAL FOREST PARTNERSHIP TRAIL FUNDING AVAILABLE

The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, in collaboration with American Trails, the American Hiking Society, Back Country Horsemen of America, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, and the American Motorcyclist Association, is pleased to announce the 4th round of the National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partnership Funding (Trail Stewardship Partner Funding) through the financial assistance of the USDA Forest Service for trail maintenance on National Forest System trails for the 2021 Field season - May 2021 through December 2021. Deadline Extended until April 9, 2021.

Read more here: <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-partner-funding-available>

NATIONAL PROGRAM TRAINS VOLUNTEER, PROFESSIONAL SAWYERS

Sawyers are vital to the trail world, as they are responsible for sawing timber, clearing brush and tripping hazards, and more. Such an important job requires well trained and responsible sawyers. The United States Forest Service (USFS) created the National Crosscut and Chainsaw Program to help train and certify sawyers for trail work.

Trail crews have shrunk in size over the last several years, and often only consist of 4 – 5 people, making it difficult to keep up with trail maintenance. Part of tackling this issue is certifying volunteer sawyers, and additionally training trail stewards to be able to train others in the field. This model allows for sawyer training to be available to people across the nation, and critically, allows the establishment of sawyer training opportunities outside of the traditional cadre of USFS trainers. This builds our nation's capacity by including skilled sawyer trainers working in nonprofits, volunteer groups, and for profit companies.

Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yzwtoeal>



From American Trails article

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES OUTDOORS FOR ALL ACT

Public Lands and local parks play a vital role in the physical, social and economic well-being of our communities. The Outdoors for All Act will help underserved communities access parks and public lands, protect areas sacred to Indigenous peoples, ensure clean and safe drinking water, and promote the outdoor recreation economy.

Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y787botu>

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

- National Forest Foundation's Matching Awards Program (ddline June 9): <https://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

ADVOCACY

- Bills to lobby for
 - Barragán, Turner, Neguse Introduce Bipartisan Parks, Jobs, and Equity Act: <https://tinyurl.com/35tc68pf>
 - Connecting America's Active Transportation System Act: <https://tinyurl.com/xawxn6ra>

VOLUNTEER

- American Hiking Society: 2021 Volunteer Vacations, COVID-19 Update: <https://tinyurl.com/y3nr9a4o>
- American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacations crew leaders needed: <https://tinyurl.com/ufrfz8xc>
- Conservation International Virgin Islands November trip: <https://tinyurl.com/zythd8fc>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- The Best Hike in Every National Park: <https://tinyurl.com/ydj3v6tf>
- "Great Trails: Providing Quality OHV Trails And Experiences" Is Now Available For Download Directly From NOHVCC.org: <https://tinyurl.com/2k88dch2>
- Trails Community Appropriations Recommendations for FFY 2022: <https://tinyurl.com/y8yz2hx2>
- First woman to thru-hike the 1,200-mile Ice Age Trail in winter: <https://tinyurl.com/4kwwktru>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Trail Etiquette - What to Do with Horse Poo: <https://tinyurl.com/3z9vcby6>
- Want to improve your health? Head to a national park, absorb the sounds: <https://tinyurl.com/y4bcn6ek>

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