

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### FREE SESSION TO FOCUS ON CREATING GOOD TRAIL STEWARDS

A training class in September will help people learn how to care for trails they love, including how to organize other trail lovers into groups of volunteer trail stewards.

The two-part class will be held Saturday, September 19, 9am to 3:30pm, in Girdwood. The morning session will be indoors at the Chugach National Forest Glacier Ranger District Office, 145 Forest Station Road. That session will focus on the elements of basic trail maintenance and how to organize trail lovers into an effective group of trail stewards who can help keep the trails they love in great shape. The philosophy of the class is two-fold. One is that groups of people working together can make a much bigger impact than people working by themselves. The other is that doing trail work with others is a lot of fun!

After a free lunch, attendees will take what they learned in the classroom and apply it in the field by helping to fix up the Beaver Pond Trail. Tools will be provided, but all attendees should dress for doing real trail work. The class will be led by Mike Shields, a man with extensive knowledge about trail construction and maintenance.

Attendees will learn about the new Adopt-A-Trail program, run by Alaska Trails. The program is similar to the Adopt-A-Highway program. It extends the philosophy that people working together make a bigger impact. The program helps make sure different groups of people are working on different trails so that groups aren't duplicating the work of others.

The class is sponsored by Girdwood Trails, Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area, US Forest Service, and Alaska Trails. To learn more or register call the number on the masthead or email: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)

### TRACS TRAINING PLANNED FOR OCTOBER POSTPONED

The Trail Fundamentals and TRACS (Trail Assessment and Condition Surveys) training Alaska Trails had hoped to schedule for Tuesday, October 6, through Thursday, October 8, in Anchorage did not come together. We hope to offer the training in the spring of 2016. Please stay tuned for details.

### ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILERS READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



The trails building and maintenance season is not over yet. Don't forget 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 plethora 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 above). The tool trailers were originally funded by a grant from the Alaska Trails Initiative.

## ALASKA TRAILS NEEDS YOUR HELP TO PRESERVE, PROMOTE TRAILS

This newsletter is brought to you free by Alaska Trails. Our mission is to enhance the Alaska trail experience by supporting sustainable, world-renowned trails through advocacy and education. We couldn't do this without support from our members. Please join or renew your membership here: <http://tinyurl.com/mbvb76k>

All year long we strive to:

- Promote the health, social and economic benefits of trails by educating users through forums, conferences, information materials, training and other activities.
- Preserve and improve public trail access by assisting public and private organizations in forming coordinated programs, policies, and standards.
- Promote sustainable trail systems for all users by developing and providing technical assistance for trail projects.

To find out more about what Alaska Trails has accomplished recently, please see our 2014 Annual Report at: [www.alaska-trails.org/about\\_us/documents/reports/2014\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.alaska-trails.org/about_us/documents/reports/2014_Annual_Report.pdf)

## ALASKA TRAILS HAS INFO TO HELP GET ALASKANS ON TRAILS

Alaska Trails has an online database of trail guides and other trail-related information found on the Internet. The information is broken down into folders based on regions including statewide, Southeast, Southcentral, and Interior. Clicking on a folder gives a user more folders from which to choose.



People interested in exploring new trails will find an abundance of resources at their fingertips. See the database at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/cgi/otg/trailguide.cgi>  
(Graphic from Alaska State Parks [Trail Browser](#), one of the resources in the database.)

## FOUR EASY WAYS TO HELP FUND ALASKA TRAILS

With the help of other organizations, you can help Alaska Trails continue advocating for trails.

**BAGOY'S:** Anchorage-based Bagoy's Florist and Home helps through its Helping Hands web fundraising program (<http://tinyurl.com/oavza6p>). When you order online from Bagoy's ([www.bagoys.com](http://www.bagoys.com)) there is a check box at the bottom of the payment page that says "This is a Helping Hands order." When you check that box, the list of enrolled organizations are shown and you can choose Alaska Trails from the list.



**FRED MEYER REWARDS:** Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Alaska Trails at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards). You can search for Alaska Trails or by our nonprofit number – 91035. Then, every time you shop and use your rewards card, you are helping Alaska Trails earn a donation! You still earn your rewards points, fuel points, and rebates, just as you do today.



**AMAZONSMILE:** If you shop at Amazon, please take the simple extra step of signing up for AmazonSmile. It's the same Amazon website, but when you shop from AmazonSmile, you can make a donation to Alaska Trails at the same time: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/73-1677483>



**GOODSEARCH:** GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to charities designated by the user. You use it just as you would any search engine, and, it's powered by Yahoo!. Just go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and be sure to enter Alaska Trails as the charity you want to support.



Check us out on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590)

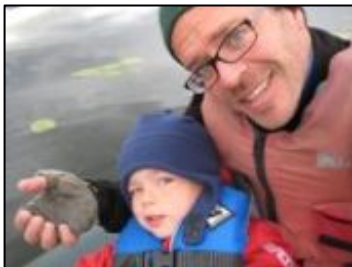
## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Steve Cleary, Executive Director

# Trail Field Work Winds Down As Summer Ends, But Trail Work Continues In Many Other Arenas

Fall is coming to Alaska and the crisp mornings are reminding us that summer is soon coming to an end. Lots of great trail work is coming to season's end, or continuing on depending on weather and other local conditions. Alaska Trails is working hard to make sure that sustainable trails are built and maintained all across the state.

Alaska Trails also continues to monitor state and federal legislation and agency activity to make sure that politicians at all levels understand the importance of trails – to our



communities, public health and the economy. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) will continue to

receive funding in the latest transportation bill in Congress. The grant cycle in Alaska continues this fall, with a \$100,000 maximum for motorized applications. In addition, all grant applications for the FFY16 cycle will be allowed to charge indirect costs to the RTP grant at either a federally approved indirect cost rate or the 10% de minimis rate, which will enable small organizations to better afford the costs of administering an RTP grant.

Tools from the Alaska Trails tool trailer have been on the ground at the Singletrack Advocate's trails at Kincaid Park in Anchorage, at the Chugiak Dog Musers' Trails in Birchwood and have made a couple trips to Arctic Valley with the Friends on the Nike Site Summit, who were assisted by the Alaska Military Youth Academy. It is exciting to see so much volunteer activity to build and maintain trails.

## Adopt-A-Trail

In an effort to capitalize on the increasing interest in volunteering on trails, Alaska Trails is working with many partners to build an Adopt-A-Trail program that will connect people to the trails they love. Our first volunteer training is scheduled for Saturday, September 19, in Girdwood. We hope that this will be the first of many. The goal is to get communities – individuals, schools, groups and businesses – more involved in the trails they used every week and sometime every day.

By training capable volunteers and connecting them with government agencies in need of trail support, the Adopt-A-Trail program will significantly increase the amount of maintenance performed on trails in Alaska. This is important as government budgets at all levels are on the decline. We hope that volunteers across the state will join in this effort and we welcome your ideas.

## Public Lands Day – September 26

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. In 2015, NPLD 2015 will take place on Saturday, September 26. On NPLD in 2014, more than 175,000 volunteers and park visitors celebrated at more than 2,100 public land sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In Alaska, events are planned in Sitka, Anchorage and the Steese National Conservation Area and White Mountains Recreation Area. More information on how you can host your own event at: <http://www.publiclandsday.org/>  
Hope you can help on September 26.

Happy Trails,  
Steve Cleary

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### STATE TO HOLD TELECONFERENCES TO ASSIST RTP GRANT APPLICANTS

New or experienced applicants for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant program are invited to join two teleconferences on Tuesday, September 1, and Tuesday October 6. Both teleconferences will be 11am to 1pm.



Topics include: program guidelines and restrictions; what constitutes a successful application; project eligibility and deadlines; the role of the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board; reporting and billing requirements; how to put together a successful budget; how to create a feasible schedule; the new applicable CFR 200; and how to know if you need to fill out an Environmental Review Checklist.

To join the teleconference, call 866/918-8374 and enter Conference code 5569714090. Anyone interested in applying for an RTP grant who is unable to join a teleconference is encouraged to contact Darcy Harris

([darcy.harris@alaska.gov](mailto:darcy.harris@alaska.gov); 907/269-8699) any time before the Nov. 15 grant application deadline. Attendees should look over documents on the Alaska RTP page (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>) prior to the training in case they have specific questions about the process.

The due date for posting a public notice about specific projects is October 15. The application due date is November 15.

The Recreational Trail Grant Program provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities. The program also provides funds for safety and educational programs. To learn more about the program, please visit the Recreational Trails Program page at:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

*(Photo: Working on the Government Peak Recreation Area singletrack bike trail, which was partially funded by a Recreational Trails Program grant; from the Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers website.)*



### DENALI NATIONAL PARK SEEKS INPUT ON TRAILS MANAGEMENT

Denali National Park and Preserve managers invite public input and comments about their vision for trail management as part of a future trails management plan.

The National Park Service (NPS) articulated a vision for trails nearly 30 years ago in the General Management Plan for the park. The 1986 plan has had major revisions since that time, both in the 1997 Front Country Plan (FCP) and the 2006 Backcountry Management Plan (BCMP). The park has completed many of the trail projects in the FCP and BCMP and the maintained trail network is popular with visitors. The park's designated wilderness remains largely free of maintained trails but is subject to increasing social trail formation. Park managers are interested in revisiting their vision for trails as the park approaches its centennial in 2017. Denali's planning documents can be accessed at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/denalitrailsplan>.



Park staff members are preparing a vision for trail management in a formal trails plan, as well as pursuing an Environmental Assessment of the Nenana River Trail (proposed in the FCP), the Mt. Healy Overlook Loop Trail (proposed in the BCMP and FCP), and trail connections to an improved day use area along Riley Creek. To help with the planning, the staff would like to hear from the public. Members of the public are invited to:

- Comment on hiking opportunities in Denali.

- Comment on proposals for future trails or suggestions for limiting trail development.
- Submit specific suggestions for allowing bicycle use and pet use on trails, for construction and maintenance standards, and signage.
- Comment on use of and visions for winter trails and river trails.
- Submit input in planning a Nenana River Trail and Mt Healy Overlook Loop Trail.
- Comment on any related trail topic.

Comments are encouraged and may be submitted through October 1, 2015, through the website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/denalitrailsplan>. Comments may also be submitted through email ([dena\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:dena_planning@nps.gov)) or phone (907/683-6241). People without Internet access may request paper copies of the documents by phone at 907/683-6241.

*(Photo: Montana Troyer on the Savage Alpine Trail in Denali National Park; by Corrine Leistikow.)*

## COMMENTS DUE ON BLM METHODS FOR REC PLANNING PUBLIC INPUT

Planners at the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) want to get more public input in their recreation planning process. The planners are proposing methods to increase public input, but before they can be used those methods must first be approved by the US Office of Management and Budget. The first step is to announce and briefly describe their proposed methods via a 60-day notice published in the Federal Register. The 60-day notice provides opportunity for the public to comment.

Summary of 60-day notice:

*In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve a collection of information to support recreation planning and management on public lands. The respondents will be recreationists visiting BLM-managed areas and members of communities near BLM-managed areas. The BLM invites public comments on this proposed collection. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.*

*The full 60 day notice can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/q9x47v4>*

Comments on these methods are due by September 14, 2015. The page includes a "How to Comment" link.

*(From Peter Fix, UAF)*

## STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- *Eagle Watch*, Alaska State Parks (August): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/> (> Newsroom)

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- Amendment 16 to the 2012-2015 STIP was approved on Aug 25: <http://tinyurl.com/o77nj2c>
- McKinley no more: America's tallest peak to be renamed Denali: <http://tinyurl.com/qfm7o2h>
- State extends 2009 decision to issue permits for certain rubber-tracked vehicles heavier than 1500 pounds on Rex Trail during 2015 hunting season: <http://tinyurl.com/n9hue5f>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show:
  - Wrangell-St. Elias backcountry: <http://tinyurl.com/qb7ouo7>
  - The Resurrection Pass Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/q5dp48x>
  - Denali Highway & Tangle Lakes: <http://tinyurl.com/nf2zucq>
  - Arctic Paddling Trips: <http://tinyurl.com/otctfx4>

## SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Top ten cabins on the Tongass National Forest: <http://tinyurl.com/ndp8vgt>

### CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY WITH SOME TRAIL WORK

Two trail projects are being held in Anchorage in celebration of National Public Lands Day. National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. To find out more about the event, including other events in Alaska, see: <http://www.publiclandsday.org> under "Find a Site."



#### Campbell Tract/Campbell Creek Science Center



The Campbell Tract/Campbell Creek Science Center needs volunteers to help with some trail work.

The event will be on September 26, from 8am to 5pm, and will also include habitat improvement, such as pulling weeds and revegetating areas, addressing safety concerns and more. Projects will be performed primarily with hand tools such as shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows and hand saws. There will be work for participants of all ages. Volunteers gather at the Campbell Creek Science Center.

For more information contact Jeff Brune ([jbrune@blm.gov](mailto:jbrune@blm.gov); 907/267-1255).

*(Photo: Volunteers working on trails at Campbell Tract during the 2007 National Public Lands Day; from BLM website.)*

#### Rover's Run/Mellen's Way Safety Improvements

Volunteers are needed to finish past trail efforts to increase safety by brushing, limbing and reducing wildlife / bear surprises on trails in Far North Bicentennial Park.

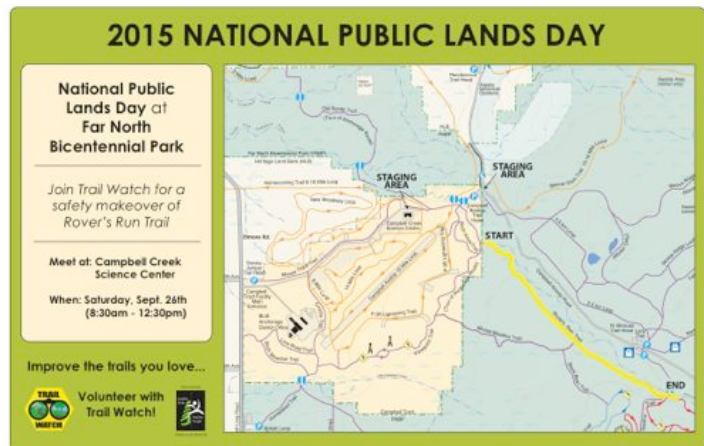
The work will be held on Saturday, September 26. The half day project will be centered on Rover's Run / Mellen's Way, a popular mountain biking and ski-joring trail. The work will complete visibility improvements on the Moose Meadows and Rovers Run loop. Volunteers will help open up off-trail visibility and line-of-sight on approximately 4,800 feet of trail from the intersection of Viewpoint and Rover's Run trails eastward to the Moose Meadows some 200 feet east of the Moose Meadow trail intersection.

For the convenience of volunteers, the project will have two work staging areas: BLM Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, and Campbell Airstrip Road, Mile 1.1 Trail Head. Registration will be held 8:15-8:30am. The project will start soon after and will be finished around noon. Immediately following the work a pizza party will be hosted by the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center.

Volunteers are asked to be prepared with appropriate weather gear, work boots, work gloves, water, and sweat band or small face towel. Loppers and brushing tools will be provided if volunteers need them. Trail Watch volunteers should wear the Trail Watch arm bands or vests.

This project is being put on by Trail Watch, an Anchorage Parks and Recreation volunteer program, in concert with BLM and supported by Anchorage Parks and Recreation.

For more information contact Michelle Fehribach, Parks and Recreation Volunteer Coordinator [907-343-4587](tel:907-343-4587).



### FREE ATV/SALMON STREAM CROSSING WORKSHOP OFFERED IN MAT-SU

The Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding a free ATV/Salmon Stream Crossing Construction Workshop in October. While the sessions are free, they are limited to 25 participants, so interested people need to act quickly to make sure they are registered.

Three sessions of the workshop will be held at different places:

- Tues Oct. 6, 8:30am – 5pm, Atwood Bldg/DNR Conference Rm, Suite 1270
- Sat. Oct 10, 9am - 5pm, Mat Su College
- Wed. Oct. 14, 7-8:30pm, Mat Su College; condensed public information session

To register please contact Chuck Kaucic, district manager, Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District ([distmgr@wasillaswcd.org](mailto:distmgr@wasillaswcd.org); 907/357-4511).

The purpose of the workshop is to introduce and educate people to the intricacies of assessing and constructing fish friendly ATV trail salmon stream crossings. The intent is to:

- 1) provide factual knowledge of salmon biological basics and stream crossing impacts;
- 2) define/explain state rules regulating salmon stream crossings;
- 3) present a “state of the state” on present crossing conditions, discussion of present education outreach and needed priorities for constructing crossings;
- 4) offer detailed “mechanics” of selecting and constructing appropriate crossing improvements/options – an illustrated manual will be issued.

Presenters include Mike Bethe, manager, and Sarah Wilber, biologist (Palmer ADF&G office); Mike Shields, nationally known trail builder consultant; a State Parks engineer (invited); and Chuck Kaucic, ATV/salmon stream crossing assessment and outreach project manager

*(From Chuck Kaucic)*

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION TO HOLD VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CLASS

Working with trails often means working with volunteers. Knowing how to treat volunteers properly is key to getting them to come back time and time again.

“Volunteer Management: Running An Organized Program Workshop” will be held on September 10 from 9am to 12:30pm at the Cooperative Extension Service Anchorage Office, 1675 C Street, Suite 100. This workshop will give you the knowledge of volunteer program management, plus tips and techniques for running a successful program. Volunteer managers have a huge job. Their responsibilities include being a volunteer, recruiter, motivator, cheerleader, interviewer, evaluator, and “go-to” person for any need. Cost \$25 Workshop leader: Marianne Kerr. For more information and to register, go to

[https://epay.alaska.edu/C21563\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=765](https://epay.alaska.edu/C21563_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=765).

*(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)*

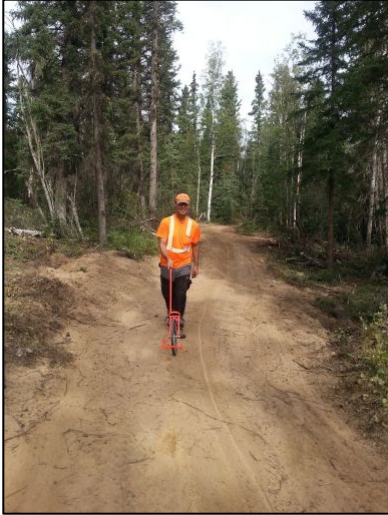
## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- 50 Reasons Why We Love Hatcher Pass – Photo Gallery: <http://tinyurl.com/o4wamt8>
- Mountain bikers hit new trails in Mat-Su Valley: <http://tinyurl.com/o5apmrx>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network *Trails Update*: <http://tinyurl.com/nhyj8pk>
- Bike repair stations opening around Anchorage trails: <http://tinyurl.com/o7kupfo>
- Biking and hiking Kennecott's abandoned mine sites: <http://tinyurl.com/ndreo66>
- Anchorage hiker notches 1,000th ascent of Near Point summit: <http://tinyurl.com/oa8tuyo>
- Eklutna Lake's Twin Peaks Trail: Elevation and ice cream: <http://tinyurl.com/qh9cfv3>
- Exploring Anchorage's varied and scenic bike trails: <http://tinyurl.com/qgchnor>
- Photos: Hiking 6,000-foot-plus Pioneer Peak: <http://tinyurl.com/phwosa9>
- Anchorage teenagers hit the trails to make a difference: <http://tinyurl.com/q4mcmfs>
- Paddleboarder meets whale on Kachemak Bay Water Trail (photo): <http://tinyurl.com/nudf85j>

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP FINISH DELTA JUNCTION SKI TRAILS

The Delta Junction Trails Association (DJTA) is holding four work parties in September to finish the Liewer Community Trail, the first trail in Delta Junction built specifically for cross-country skiing.

The parties will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30-6:30pm, Sept 1, 3, 8, and 10. Meet at the trailhead near the Delta High School parking lot where the buses load. People willing to help should bring their own loppers if they have them. Otherwise, DJTA has tools available, provided by Alaska Trails.



When the work parties are over, the trail will be rolled and seeded so that grass will grow in the spring. The Delta Junction Trails Association (DJTA) asks that people stay off of it this fall (until it freezes) and next spring to allow the trail to harden so that it can be ready for use in the summer. However, when enough snow falls, it will be groomed with double-lane classic tracks for skiing. It has both flat and rolling terrain to provide skill-building opportunities for novices and a gentle roller coaster type flow for the more experienced skiers. In winter, walkers are asked to stay off the tracks to keep them nice for skiing. (Tracks will be set to allow room for walkers.)

In summer, the Liewer Community Trail will be managed for walking to the greatest extent possible while still providing for its primary use as a ski trail in winter.

The trail will eventually be lighted. DJTA has been awarded a \$7,000 Goodcents Grant from the Golden Valley Electric Association to be applied toward lighting the trail, which will be a multi-phase project with the assistance and contributions from local contractor Morley Electric.

The trail is being built thanks to the efforts of the DJTA, Ron Liewer and many others. The trail runs on easements through property owned by Ron Liewer, Delta/Greely School District and a City of Delta Junction Right of Way. The DJTA obtained a \$40,000 grant from the Recreation Trails Program and then hired Jon Underwood, of Fairbanks-based Happy Trails, Inc., as the trail contractor. Underwood has a strong background in cross-country skiing, which strengthened the trail's design and construction. He, along with Mark Gronewald of Palmer-based Trailwerx, spent a week in July building this approximately 1.25 miles (2 kilometers) trail adjacent to Delta High School.

Two years ago, Ron Liewer, long-time Delta Junction resident and teacher, shared his dream of a nature/ski trail with members of the DJTA. Through DJTA community outreach, a vision for the trail proposal was developed with assistance from National Parks Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program and Geoff Orth's consulting business Stray Dogs, of Fairbanks.

For more information call 907/322-4644 or visit the DJTA on Facebook or at <http://www.deltajunctiontrails.com/>

*(Photo: Jon Underwood of Happy Trails, Inc, measures a portion of the new Liewer Community Trail; by Mindy Eggleston.)*

### BLM TRIES TO FIX WET PROBLEM PORTION OF SUMMIT TRAIL

A problem section of the Summit Trail in the White Mountains National Recreation Area is once again getting some attention.

The section, about 1.5 miles in from the Wickersham Dome Trailhead at Mile 28 Elliott Highway, is often wet and muddy. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) installed boardwalk over the section in the 1970s. But boardwalk is expensive to construct and maintain. It was often in disrepair and portions of it were sometimes submerged making it difficult to use. Boardwalk also causes problems for trail users on bicycles or horses.



Several years back BLM removed most of the boardwalk and tried a method called “ditch and elevate,” in which material is dug from one side of the trail corridor (creating a ditch) and piled onto the trail tread (to elevate it). The idea is that water stays in the ditch while the trail tread remains dry. (A more thorough description can be found in Kevin Meyer’s book *Designing Sustainable Off-Highway Vehicle Trails*: <http://tinyurl.com/pvgt5ep>.) Ditch and elevate has been used successfully in other places, including the Quartz Creek Trail, but for a variety of reasons it didn’t work well along this section of Summit Trail.



BLM is again trying ditch and elevate, only this time it is also using Geoblock, interlocking polyethylene sheets made of hollow cells used to harden trails. Crews are laying down the Geoblock and covering it with gravel along about 200 feet of trail, according to Tim DuPont, a BLM outdoor recreation planner. The Geoblock is used to keep the gravel from sinking into the mud or dispersing to the sides. BLM has successfully used this method on some wet portions of the Pinnell Mountain Trail.

However, while working on the Summit Trail the multiple trips required with the trail work equipment began to soften the trail, so the crew left some Geoblock exposed for now, DuPont wrote in an email. The crew plans to return to finish the work after there is a light freeze later this fall, so that the surface of the trail can better sustain the weight of the equipment.

*(Photo: ditching the Summit Trail in 2010; BLM photo by Craig McCaa)*

## STATE PARKS IMPROVING, BUILDING TRAILS IN CHENA RIVER REC AREA

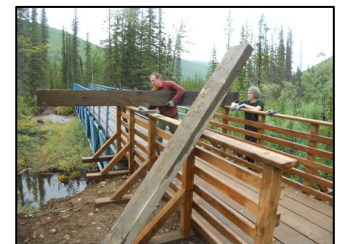
The Alaska State Parks trail crew has been tackling several trail projects in the Chena River State Recreation Area this year.

### YEAR-ROUND MOTORIZED MULTIUSE TRAILS



**COMPEAU TRAIL:** Earlier this summer the crew hardened a short section of the Compeau Trail, where it crosses the Winter Trail, about a half mile from the trailhead. That section of trail runs across wetlands and has been a problem. Previously crews tried Geoblock (interlocking polyethylene sheets made of hollow cells used to harden trails), but that started to come apart under the weight of ATVs. This summer the crew bolstered the Geoblock with corduroy (logs), fractured rock, and fabric, and then topped it with gravel. The new work should easily keep trail users out of the wetlands.

**ANGEL CREEK HILLSIDE TRAIL:** The bridge to the Upper Angel Creek Cabin was closed for a few days in August while the crew hardened approaches to the bridge, replaced planking, and re-vegetated a gravel site used during construction. Some old trail drags originally used to deliver the bridge were prepped to haul out this winter. The crew also spent a couple of weeks in August re-grading the out-slope and cleaning out grade reversals of the Angel Creek Hillside Trail.



**STILES CREEK TRAIL:** Also in August, the crew started maintenance of the Stiles Creek Trail. Work calls for cleaning out 200 rolling grade dips that have silted in, hardening sections of trail, and clearing the trail corridor.

**STILES CREEK EXTENSION:** Work continues on rerouting the Stiles Creek Extension trail. This year two more miles of the 4.5-mile trail were built. Crews will have about another 1.5 miles to build next year. The reroute moves the trail to a new, more sustainable alignment and eliminates a dangerous steep section. The extension

trail comes off of the popular Stiles Creek Trail at about Mile 10 and connects to the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail and Chena Hot Springs Road at Mile 41.6. Once finished it will add another access option to the Stiles Creek Trail, including a loop options in winter by connecting with the other two Stiles Creek trailheads along the Winter Trail.

#### YEAR-ROUND NONMOTORIZED MULTIUSE TRAILS

**ANGEL ROCKS TRAIL:** In September, the trail crew will harden a badly eroded section of the Angel Rocks Trail with wood chips. The crew will also build a rock wall to keep folks on the trail and prevent people from accidentally following a steep cut-off.

**MASTODON CREEK TRAIL:** Work continues on the Mastodon Creek Trail, a new trail that will run from Chena Hot Springs Road to the Nugget Creek Public Use Cabin. The cabin is now accessible only via the winter-only South Fork Winter Trail or the Mist Creek Trail, a tough, poorly marked trail that requires crossing the Chena River. Jon Underwood, Happy Trails Inc., has a rough trail in about six miles, which is about halfway. He ran into some wet soils in a lower area near a creek crossing and had to consult with state parks before rerouting the trail more quickly to higher ground. Work will continue on the trail and state parks hopes it will be finished in 2017.

*(Photos: Hardening the Compeau Trail; working on the Angel Creek bridge; both courtesy of Alaska State Parks)*

### **DOT PATH PROJECTS MAKING HEADWAY IN FAIRBANKS, NORTH POLE**

The Fairbanks branch of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has been making steady progress on several trail projects in the area.

One of the most visible projects has been the construction of paths along West Tanana, Sheep Creek, Miller Hill and Yankovich roads. When finished, the path will extend from the roundabout on the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) along the north side of West Tanana Drive and connect to the already existing path along Sheep Creek Road. The section of that path up to Miller Hill Road is being realigned and improved. A new path will extend from the intersection of Sheep Creek Road along the east side of Miller Hill Road up to Yankovich Road and then along the south side of Yankovich to a spot opposite the Large Animal Research Station.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner had a story about the project earlier (<http://tinyurl.com/o2sm8uv>). According to the story work on the path will create a steeper approach to the Big Whizzy trailhead. However, that approach will be modified, according to UAF Trails Manager Jason Garron. UAF is waiting for the DOT contractors, H.C. Contractors, Inc., to finish their work, Garron said.

"We are prepared to then go in and rework the connection to make it as smooth as possible," Garron wrote in an email. "Same for the commuter trail. I had material delivered just the other day in preparation."

Other DOT trail projects in the area include paths along Chena Small Tracts Road and Plack Road in North Pole. Earlier, DOT crews refurbished the unpaved path along Ballaine Road.

### **WORK BEGUN ON ROCK FORD OVER NOME CREEK FOR PRINDLE TRAIL**

Volunteers this past weekend started a creek ford for the Mount Prindle Trail despite snow in the vicinity and Nome Creek being near flood conditions. Work will be completed this weekend or next if conditions improve.

The work was done on Saturday, August 29, as a part of National Public Lands Day through a partnership of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Northern Environmental Center, and the Conservation Lands Foundation. Mount Prindle Trail is a nonmotorized hiking trail in the Nome Creek valley northeast of Fairbanks.

"Many thank yous to the crew that helped out," BLM's Michelle Ethun wrote in an email. "It is fantastic to see such dedication and enthusiasm."

The volunteer crew successfully built a few of the ford sections about six feet into the crossing. However, Nome Creek was near flood stage after heavy rain so volunteers could not safely get into the creek to move the rocks for a rock ford to the other side. The volunteers worked for nearly four hours moving large rocks from the



surrounding area to be cached near the crossing. BLM will assess the water levels this coming week. If they are safer agency personnel will head up completion of the crossing.

"All the really hard work is done," Ethun wrote. "It should only take an hour or two to complete the ford. We welcome any volunteers who want to help and will update interested folks via the White Mountains Facebook page early this week."

Mount Prindle Trail, which starts at the Mount Prindle campground in the White Mountains National Recreation Area, has numerous stream crossings including two larger crossings at the beginning, with the first being over Nome Creek. Recreational users in the past have attempted to build rock crossings. Improperly designed, these can impede stream flow and are washed away by annual icing each winter.

After a comprehensive environmental review, BLM specialists designed a rock crossing that allows for fish passage, maintains a stable stream channel, and should withstand winter icing.

*(From BLM press release and emails from Chel Ethun, BLM assistant field manager; photo by Jessica Girard)*

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Alaska's top riders take the Challenge of the North: <http://tinyurl.com/nbvdcrc>
- UAF asks for Fairbanks help in Outdoor Nation competition: <http://tinyurl.com/phawa7c>
- Birch Hill Recreation Area rich with ski history (editorial): <http://tinyurl.com/o6er39u>
- Adventure Photographer Seth Adams Featured At September First Friday: <http://tinyurl.com/o66jb2d>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES BILL TO CONTINUE IMPORTANT TRAILS FUND

Legislation approved by the Senate Energy Committee would reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) permanently. Most of the funds would be split 40-40 between federal projects and grants to states for local projects, including trails and greenways. This 40 percent minimum for "grants to states" would also include US Forest Service Forest Legacy programs for "working forests," US Fish and Wildlife Service Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation, and the the National Park Service [American Battlefield Protection Program](#). The bill would also establish a separate National Park Service maintenance account.

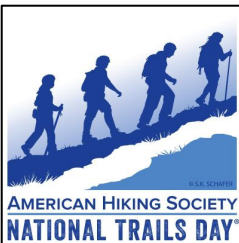
Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a separate FY 2016 appropriations bill (S 1645). It would appropriate \$157.5 million for the federal land acquisition and \$55 million for state grants. On the House side, a bill said to be stalled on the floor would appropriate \$91 million for the federal side and \$48 million for the state side. LWCF's current authorization will expire on September 30.

To help fight for renewal of the LWCF see: <http://tinyurl.com/o2ngsd7>

*(From American Trails)*

For an article that includes a bit about Sen. Lisa Murkowski's support of the LWCF and the reasons others oppose the fund see: <http://tinyurl.com/qhm2k4m>

### NATIONAL TRAILS DAY DRAWS THOUSANDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



As the largest celebration of trails in America, National Trails Day® 2015 (NTD) events lured more adventurers than ever before, drawing 176,000 explorers to trails in all 50 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, and Canada - a 22 percent increase from 2014!

"Twenty-three years ago, American Hiking Society created National Trails Day around the idea that for one day each year we should come together outdoors and give back to our favorite trails," notes Gregory Miller, American Hiking Society President. "Since then, people from all walks of life have been coming out in increasing numbers on NTD to celebrate our trails and the great outdoors."

From hiking, biking, and horseback riding to birdwatching, paddling, geocaching and more, NTD event organizers hosted 2,329 activities.

- 79,300 hikers laced up their boots and hit the trails at 1,203 hiking events, walking a cumulative distance of 354,000 miles.
- 24,670 trail volunteers helped maintain and build 1,490 miles of trail
- 8,800 bikers participated in 113 bike rides, pedaling a cumulative distance of 123,000 miles.
- 3,500 paddlers launched kayaks and canoes on 40 paddling trips on rivers, lakes, and streams, paddling a cumulative distance of 13,600 miles.
- 1,800 equestrians saddled up for 28 horseback riding trips, riding a cumulative distance of 36,000 miles.

Help us make next year's National Trails Day even bigger than this year! NTD is the first Saturday of every June. Lace up your boots and mark your calendars for June 4, 2016!

*(From Paperless Trail, the American Hiking Society e-newsletter)*

## **MORE MEDIA EMPHASIZING THE HEALING POWER OF NATURE**

A flurry of newspaper articles, blog posts, and social campaigns are all pointing towards the same conclusion, one that most hikers have been swearing by for decades - more time in nature makes you healthier and happier, doing the body and brain good.

"A walk in the park may soothe the mind and, in the process, change the workings of our brains in ways that improve our mental health, according to an interesting new study of the physical effects on the brain of visiting nature," writes *New York Times* blogger, Gretchen Reynolds. Stanford researches share, "A new study finds quantifiable evidence that walking in nature could lead to a lower risk of depression." Research even shows that simply looking at photos of nature has a rejuvenating effect on the brain and that kids who are exposed to more greenery during the school day perform better on exams.

Doctors are so convinced and impressed by the results of spending more time in nature that they are actually prescribing it to their patients. Dr. Robert Zarr, a pediatrician in DC is the "physician champion" of DC Parks Rx, an innovative community health program committed to increasing the amount of time urbanites are connecting with nature by prescribing time outdoors. Filmmakers are joining in on the movement, too. Nature Rx, created by a team of filmmakers, is a short series of one-minute long videos that "encourage folks to spend time outdoors by spoofing prescription drug commercials." See a Nature Rx video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bf5TgVRGND4>

*(From Paperless Trail, the American Hiking Society e-newsletter)*

## **NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL APPLICATIONS DUE SOON**

Some applications for designating a trail as a National Recreation Trail are due by November.



For trails on private, city, county, or state land, or on federal land NOT overseen by the Department of Agriculture, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Those applications are due on November 1 of each year.

For trails on National Forests, National Grasslands, and National Recreation Areas and associated lands, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Those may be submitted anytime, but must be submitted by February 15 to be included in publicity with DOI designations each June.

For more about applying see: [www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/ApplyNRT.html](http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/ApplyNRT.html)

## **AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY HAS VOLUNTEERS FOR TRAIL PROJECTS**

Land managers, volunteer coordinators, trail and park organizations...we want to send you hardworking and dedicated volunteers to fulfill your trail project needs in 2016! We understand that with reduced budgets and limited resources, trail building and maintaining needs often get backlogged or remain incomplete. Our Volunteer

Vacations program is designed to send you a crew of eager volunteers, ready to assist with your trail needs. For more information: [www.americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/host-information/](http://www.americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/host-information/)

## NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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### 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](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)

### ADVOCACY

- Lobby Congress to renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund: <http://tinyurl.com/nwncg7x>

### RECENT TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS/MAGAZINES

- American Trails (August): <http://tinyurl.com/q5jrmdy>

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Five common types of trail use rules (everyone should know): <http://tinyurl.com/nqac84e>
- Things to do in Smoky Mountains National Park (including several hikes): <http://smokymountains.com/park/>
- Travelogue Oregon: Beach biking bliss on the coast: <http://tinyurl.com/qjv5ol3>
- 10 terrific national park hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/omxyp9g>
- Visitor-built cairns clutter trails at Arches National Park, officials say: <http://tinyurl.com/nzlumsj>
- Mysterious cairns appearing on hiking trails in Arizona: <http://tinyurl.com/nsugdy2>
- (Mostly) in praise of off-trail hiking: <http://tinyurl.com/nzud5eq>
- Best Urban Trail as chosen by readers of USA TODAY and 10Best: <http://tinyurl.com/nqe368e>
- 17 unforgettable Illinois hiking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/pful5b6>
- Michigan's top 11 water trails named: <http://tinyurl.com/pzvpl3m>
- TOP 10: Scenic hiking trails among Inland's best (California): [www.pe.com/articles/trail-776565-mile-san.html](http://www.pe.com/articles/trail-776565-mile-san.html)
- How car-centric Indianapolis turned into a more walkable city (including trails): <http://tinyurl.com/ofofteo>
- Top 5 trails in Utah to hike with your dog: <http://tinyurl.com/o7jlsom>
- Knoxville area trails consider recycled concrete: <http://tinyurl.com/ozglpre>
- Recognition of trails expected to increase Arkansas tourism: <http://tinyurl.com/p4wqa79>
- As Temperatures Rise in Phoenix, Hikers Embrace Heat on a Grueling Ascent: <http://tinyurl.com/ogjdgoy>
- More hut-to-hut hiking in USA? Part 1: Benefits: <http://tinyurl.com/qjh9cp5>
- Jeffco Open Space (Colorado) testing separate trails for different speeds: <http://tinyurl.com/p7avod3>
- 'Wild,' 'Walk in the Woods' Make an Impact on Hiking Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/puk53ak>
- 5 family-friendly vacations with hiking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/o67zoek>
- Missouri towns see new Rock Island Line bicycle trail as a path to prosperity: <http://tinyurl.com/p2hvs55>
- American Hiking Society's *Volunteer Vacations* trail crew requests are due Oct 9: <http://tinyurl.com/qe6znox>
- Oh, the Places You'll Go: Trails Across America: <http://tinyurl.com/onq2mgw>
- What's Your Trail Etiquette IQ?: <http://tinyurl.com/q3com7j>

### INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- B.C. hiking trails: 3 tips and suggestions from Sam Waddington: <http://tinyurl.com/pe27m7k>
- Upcoming trail work opportunities in Patagonia, Chile: <http://tinyurl.com/owhuek8>
- 50 Years of National Trails: a very English triumph: <http://tinyurl.com/o2m55wn>
- Spectacular, scenic hiking along New Zealand's Great Walks: <http://tinyurl.com/pfk3585>

- Germany's 10 best hiking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/oj2mkdd>
- UNESCO recognizes amazing Inca Trails in Peru: <http://tinyurl.com/pu479jj>

#### *SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL*

- Meet Trail Life USA, conservatism's answer to the Boy Scouts: <http://tinyurl.com/ohryo4x>
- Calling 'fowl': Geese create messy obstacle course on trails: <http://tinyurl.com/oo8ywae>
- 12 summits with outrageous names: <http://tinyurl.com/nv8nmas>
- Adding trails on Iowa's 'Mount Trashmore': <http://tinyurl.com/oa7hq2r>
- Boston Dynamics' robot goes for unsettling outdoors jog on a trail: <http://tinyurl.com/q2amv9d>

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The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference on the second Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00 pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us for an hour. Members and the public are welcome. More info: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)

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 five days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at [eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org](mailto:eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org)