

ACTION UPDATE

February 2015

FAIRBANKS/NORTH POLE AREA

SKARLAND, PEARL CREEK MEETING HAS POSITIVE RESULTS

A meeting held in early January to discuss winter uses of the Skarland and Pearl Creek trails has been described by several people as being very civil despite strong differences of opinion. More than 60 people attended.

The meeting, held at Pearl Creek Elementary School, was called to discuss whether the practice of setting ski tracks should end or change. Changing demographics and winter activities is spurring this discussion. While the trails have long been dedicated to cross-country skiing in winter, more people want to get out and use the trails in the winter with activities other than skiing, such as walking and fatbiking. Even among those who do like skiing, some don't always like set tracks. But others do, and the tracks have been set by volunteers for many years. No major decisions were made at the meeting but a few positive things have come out of it so far.

- Don Kiely created a Facebook page titled "Skarland & Pearl Creek Park Trail Users" for trail users to better communicate with each other. See it here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1553793074862242/>
- Another meeting has tentatively been set for February, but no specific time has been announced. Keep an eye on the Facebook page for an announcement.
- An online map of the Skarland and Pearl Creek Park Trails has also been made available: <http://tinyurl.com/mslhg2s>
- At the January meeting, several people commented that in some areas set tracks were a hindrance because they were in areas people preferred to snowplow or herringbone. Stan Justice, a volunteer groomer of the Skarland Trail, built a new groomer with a winch that allows him to lift the track cutter in those areas. See pictures of the groomer on the Facebook page.

FAIRBANKSANS SHOULD REMIND MAYOR OF TRAIL PROS

Mayor Luke Hopkins and his administration are in the process of developing a budget for the next year. Now is a good time for trail advocates to contact the mayor to remind him how important trails are to our community.

Trails bring many benefits that we sometimes take for granted. Among other things, trails:

- Help encourage commuting that improves health and reduces car traffic.
- Provide access to natural resources, such as game, berries, fish, and the great outdoors.

- Increase tourism by providing a place for tourist-friendly events, such as the North American Sled Dog Championships and the Iron Dog Snowmachine Race, as well as giving visitors a place to enjoy the wild expanse of Alaska.
- Improve the physical, mental, and social health of our citizens by helping to get people exercising outdoors with other like-minded people.

Later in the year, the Fairbanks Borough Assembly will be presented with the budget and the public will have a chance to comment. However, it's beneficial to have the mayor provide a budget that recognizes the importance of trails. One way to do that is to make sure the Parks and Recreation Department has a healthy budget, especially one that continues to include a full-time trails coordinator. Contact the mayor by email (Mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us), by phone (459-1300) or by snail mail (PO Box 71267-1267; Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

FAIRBANKS/NORTH POLE LINKS

- Sealed bids due Feb 19 for Plack Road Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility:
<http://tinyurl.com/nyfm8xy>

CHENA HOT SPRINGS ROAD

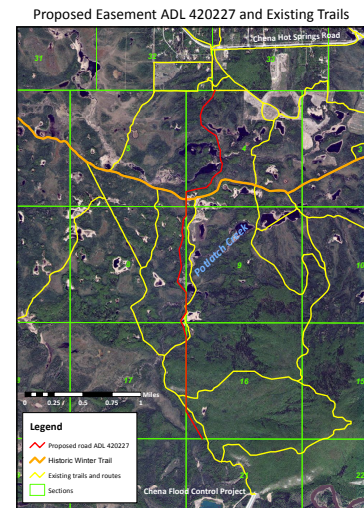
PLANNED ROAD IN TWO RIVERS AREA WILL AFFECT TRAILS

An easement application for a road in the Two Rivers area will affect trails in that area. The public has an opportunity to comment on the application.

The applicant is planning to build a road south from Sands Lane located off Chena Hot Springs Road to property near the Chena River. The application is for a public right-of-way, so access will not be restricted. How such a road would affect local trails is uncertain. The application notice can be seen at: <http://tinyurl.com/pv7ykld>. A link to a location map is at the bottom of that page.

A local trail user created a map that has the easement included in the application as well as the trails in the area. A road built on the easement will cross over several trails including the Yukon Quest Trail (labeled "Winter Trail" on the map). Trail users in the area should ask that crossings be taken into consideration if and when the road is built. If you would like a higher resolution version of the map, please email the editor at: fbxtrails@gmail.com.

Written comments must be received in writing by the DMLW, Lands Section on or before 5 p.m. Monday, February 23, 2015, in order to ensure consideration. To submit



written comments, to view the full application packet, or to seek additional information, please contact Mandy Willingham (451-2739; amanda.willingham@alaska.gov).

ELLIOTT HIGHWAY

DEADLINE NEAR FOR WHITE MOUNTAINS ARTIST PROGRAM

February 6 is the deadline for applications for the Bureau of Land Management for the Artist-In-Residence Program in the White Mountains National Recreation Area this winter. The Artist in Residence program is open to emerging or established artists working in nearly any media – including painting, printmaking, photography, writing, and music. The BLM provides transportation between Fairbanks and a rustic cabin on the White Mountains trail system. Artists are expected to donate the use of a piece of artwork inspired by their time in the White Mountains to help promote public lands. The BLM plans on offering several residencies annually in different seasons and locations, including one in the Eagle or Fortymile region next summer. As the new program grows, other public lands will be considered as well. More information and applications can be obtained from Craig Tanner at ctanner@blm.gov or [907-474-2321](tel:907-474-2321).

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

STATEWIDE

OBAMA INCLUDES RIVERS IN REFUGE WILDERNESS PLAN

President Obama's administration is recommending Wild and Scenic River designation for four rivers: Marsh Fork of the Canning, Kongakut, Hulahula, and Atigun. This move is part of the administration's attempt to get the National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain designated as wilderness. While there is little in the way of official designated land trails in the refuge, those four rivers are popular water trails. Read more about President Obama's announcement here: <http://tinyurl.com/o6te8xl>. Read about the refuge's conservation plan here: www.fws.gov/home/arctic-ccp/.

REC TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD TO MEET IN ANCHORAGE

The Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board will meet February 3 and 4 in Anchorage to consider grant applications. The public is welcome to attend the meeting which will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days in Suite 1270 of the Atwood Building, located at 550 West 7th Ave.

During the meeting, the ORTAB will evaluate grant proposals for the Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The board will provide recommendations to the director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, who will make final decisions on funding for those applications.

Contact Darcy Harris at 907/269-8699 or darcy.harris@alaska.gov to reserve a free teleconference line. For special accommodations, auxiliary aid or services, and/or an alternative communication format to participate in this meeting, please contact Darcy at least four days in advance of the meeting to make the necessary arrangements.

For more info on the Recreational Trails Program, go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>.

For more info on the Land and Water Conservation Fund go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/lwcf.htm> or contact Jean Ayers at 907-269-8694 or jean.ayers@alaska.gov.

KEEP TRAILS IN THE MINDS OF OUR LEGISLATORS

The Alaska Legislature has will soon start its session. Don't forget to keep trails issues in the minds of our legislators. They have many other things vying for their attention. If they don't hear from trail advocates they may think that trails are not important to Alaskans. Contact information for senators and representatives can be found at:

<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/>

USE "PICK. CLICK. GIVE." TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS

Alaska Trails is included in the Permanent Fund Dividend's "Pick. Click. Give" charitable contributions program. It's a secure and easy way to make a donation. When you file for your PFD online, you will be given an opportunity to donate using money from your PFD. If you do, please remember Alaska Trails.

If you use "Pick. Click. Give" you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. The group wants to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way it will know it's you making the gift.

For more information on "Pick. Click. Give" see: www.pickclickgive.org.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

Please save the date for the 2015 Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference. It will be held Thursday, April 23, through Saturday, April 25, at the Wasilla Sports Complex and the theme will be Partnership. More details to follow soon including: pre-conference sessions, agenda, speakers and more. Thanks to the Mat-Su Health Foundation for their generous support of the 2015 Statewide Trails Conference.

WEBSITE MANAGER NEEDED TO HELP PROMOTE TRAILS

Alaska Trails is looking for a new website manager. If you are interested in helping out with the group's website, please contact: office@alaska-trails.org

STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC-LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Alaska Lands Update (January): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa/>
- Alaska Nordic Skier (January): <http://anchoragenordicski.com/newsletters.htm>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- The fiction that is Jon Krakauer's 'Into The Wild': <http://tinyurl.com/n4a7tbz>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show:
 - Alone in the Wilderness: <http://tinyurl.com/qfqmxev>
 - Winter Sports and Climate Change: <http://tinyurl.com/nbqbvfh>
- Alaska State Troopers encourage lifesaving selfies for backcountry travelers: <http://tinyurl.com/p658ttw>
- Troopers urge caution after dog caught in trap near Juneau: <http://tinyurl.com/ksynyhc>
- On the Trails: Out and about: <http://tinyurl.com/ky62kto>
- Run softly but carry a big hiking stick: <http://tinyurl.com/kqda7z8>
- Snowshoeing Alaska's Mendenhall Valley: <http://tinyurl.com/mnt9gle>
- What the rains have wrought on Juneau's trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ok9mzur>
- Restoring a piece of local history: Eyak Mountain Trail Project: <http://tinyurl.com/p8q4vss>
- Find yourself in sprawling Kincaid Park with new free app: <http://tinyurl.com/lgfn3c>
- Christmas trees transformed into trails: <http://tinyurl.com/l8ohogo>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/p5y7v2v>
- Trappers, dogs clash on trails in the Mat-Su: <http://tinyurl.com/owuqkoa>
- Climate science points to dying winter sports in Southcentral Alaska: <http://tinyurl.com/kflq857>
- Anchorage Park Foundation's 2015 Challenge Grant program for parks and trails: <http://tinyurl.com/osjdlq3>
- Video: Nordic skating—really skating—on Girdwood ski trails: <http://tinyurl.com/q9q6kwf>
- Middle Fork loop trail on a fat bike: <http://tinyurl.com/lo62xop>
- Month-long bike fest kicks off Thursday night : <http://tinyurl.com/l246qgb>

NATIONWIDE

AMERICAN TRAILS SEEKS DONATIONS FOR PROGRAM

American Trails is seeking donations for its Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program.

This year the program will provide up to 20 young adults with the opportunity to attend the International Trails Symposium coming up in Portland, Oregon, on May 17-20, and receive resources that will help them reach their potential in the trails profession.

The Emerging Leaders Program immerses aspiring trail professionals (ages 19-25) in learning best practices and trends in the field and inspires them to choose a career path so they can leave a lasting legacy on the trails world. Scholarship funds cover the cost of Symposium registration, an experienced mentor pairing, field excursions in Portland, a trail-based service project, and travel and hotel accommodations.

The Emerging Leaders Program Committee is currently reviewing over 100 applications for this program, but it is still seeking sponsorships for these young leaders. With enough support, the committee will be able to bring a full group of diverse young trail enthusiasts to the symposium and inspire them to become tomorrow's leaders in trails and conservation.

For more about the program:

<http://americantrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2015-youth>

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- For a listing of upcoming trail workshops, conferences, and other meetings, see the American Trails calendar at: www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html
- Registration for the International Trails Symposium (May 17-20) is now open: <http://tinyurl.com/m39j8y8>

RECENT TRAILS-RELATED E-NEWSLETTERS

- Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (January): <http://tinyurl.com/lxutlo9>
- American Trails (January): <http://tinyurl.com/mf8hp9m>
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (December): <http://tinyurl.com/ohjvn5f>
- FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter (January): <http://tinyurl.com/nyhxdvh>

FUNDING:

- Woolrich to make collectible blankets to benefit the nonprofit trail organizations: <http://tinyurl.com/n7d9378>
- Bell Helmets offers \$100,000 grant to fund a gravity mountain bike trail: <http://tinyurl.com/pg332lw>

STUDIES/REPORTS:

- Cross-party Poll Finds Voters Want Bike/Ped Investments: <http://tinyurl.com/lguf9cv>
- How the Federal Highway Administration Makes Walking and Bicycling Safer: <http://tinyurl.com/qze8lfw>
- Inactivity 'kills more than obesity': www.bbc.com/news/health-30812439

ADVOCACY

- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy online petition to protect federal trail funding: <http://tinyurl.com/kvsyhx5>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- OpenStreetMap powers map data on web sites, mobile apps, and hardware devices: www.openstreetmap.org
- Online trails mapping service: <http://juicytrails.com>
- Colorado Fourteeners Initiative's Sustainable Trails Program: <http://tinyurl.com/mvnwnfk>
- Subscribe for National Trails Day (June 6, 2015) updates: <http://tinyurl.com/mbywzd5>
- Next National Park Service free entrance days are Feb 14-16: www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm
- New USGS Nebraska Maps Feature Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/q4c3v9h>
- 7 Tips For Winter Hiking—Plus 6 Of NPCA's Favorite Cold-Weather Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/lvs4n4n>
- Colorado governor calls for statewide bike trails: <http://tinyurl.com/kevwj7b>
- Top 10 long-distance hiking trails in the US: <http://tinyurl.com/nuw94y3>
- Days free, retirees build and maintain Arizona county trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ogtzkha>
- US DOT, AmeriCorps announce effort to expand youth workforce opportunities: <http://tinyurl.com/l3xczgx>
- Rails-to-Trails Hall of Fame routes in Idaho, Montana — and closer: <http://tinyurl.com/kwx87vk>
- The Federal Highway Administration recently revised its Q&A page for its Transportation Alternatives Program including the Recreational Trails Program: <http://tinyurl.com/o9jprzs>
- USFS issues rule for snowmobile and other motorized over-snow travel: <http://tinyurl.com/njfxcyg>
- Accused trail saboteurs had been 'trying to destroy' mountain bikers' structures on Mount Fromme going back a decade: <http://tinyurl.com/l6xxsq5>
- Paper, Smartphone Or Tablet: Montana Club Has Trail Maps Covered: <http://tinyurl.com/lgpxtwr>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- 10 of the world's most amazing long-distance trails: <http://tinyurl.com/mpy4qbd>
- Expat hopes to create first mountain biking trails in Abu Dhabi: <http://tinyurl.com/m9m23rh>
- Ramblers seek wider horizons, new trails and stunning views in Malta: <http://tinyurl.com/jwvf7q4>
- The world's greatest walking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/lasb3dg>

Interior Trails Quarterly is a free email newsletter that comes out four times a year: March, June, September, and December. ITQ Action Updates come out once a month in between regular editions of the ITQ. Both are

written and distributed by Eric Troyer, a lifelong Alaskan and trail user. To submit items, get on or off the mailing list, report problems, or anything else email Eric at fbxtrails@gmail.com. Note: submissions may be also be used in the statewide Alaska Trails newsletter.

DISCLAIMER: Interior Trails Quarterly and ITQ Action Updates are not products of any organization. However, I am a board member of the Interior Trails Preservation Coalition, a member of several Interior trail user groups, and a member of Alaska Trails and editor of its newsletter.