

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

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



This newsletter is brought to you free by Alaska Trails. If you aren't already a member, please consider joining. If you are a member, please remember to renew your membership.

We want Alaska to have the best trails in the world. Our mission is to enhance the Alaska trail experience by supporting sustainable, world-renowned trails through advocacy and education.

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.

We couldn't do this without support from our members. To become a

member please visit our "Join Us" page at: [http://www.alaska-trails.org/get\\_involved/join.shtml](http://www.alaska-trails.org/get_involved/join.shtml)

*(Photo by Kevin Turinsky of Alaska Trails Executive Director Steve tabling at an REI open house in November)*

### DATES SET FOR 2014 ALASKA TRAILS STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

The Alaska Trails Statewide Trail Conference will be held April 24-26 at Alaska Pacific University (APU) in Anchorage. Registration information and agenda to follow soon.

Alaska Trails is still seeking volunteers to help with the conference. Please call or e-mail the Alaska Trails office ([907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049); [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org)) to volunteer.

### TOOL TRAILERS HIBERNATE AFTER WORKING ALL SUMMER

After the Singletrack Advocates finished work on their new trails at Kincaid Park in Anchorage, the Alaska Trails tool trailers went into storage for the winter. Thanks to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company for their recent donation to help keep Alaska Trails and our tool trailer program going.

### 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>

## INTERNET SEARCHES CAN PROVIDE FUNDS FOR ALASKA TRAILS



What if you gave Alaska Trails a penny every time you searched the Internet? Well, you can! 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. Just 50 people searching four times a day will raise about \$730 a year without anyone spending a dime! This is an easy way to support Alaska Trails.

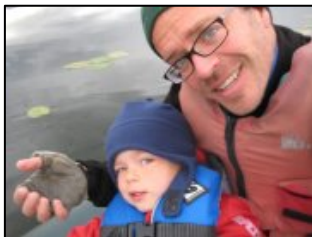
### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Steve Cleary, Executive Director

## Funding and Information: Two Critical Aspects of Trails in Alaska

### Stand Up for the RTP

With three Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants in the works currently, and another one submitted this November, Alaska Trails is both a beneficiary and supporter of the RTP. Since 2005, between the federal Alaska Trails Initiative (ATI) and the RTP, Alaska Trails has received 13 grants totaling more than \$500,000. This has not only translated into trails



for all users across the state, but also into trainings, conferences and a track record of success for sustainable trail building in Alaska. Alaska Trails is one of

many recipients across the state who have put this federal money to good use. From southeast cities like Juneau and Skagway, to non-profits like the Alaska Dog Musers Association and the Lake Louise Snowmachine Club, to the Fairbanks-North Star Borough and the Northwest Arctic Borough – the RTP program has helped build, maintain trails and make them safer.

Alaska Trails has been organizing groups and individuals to assure that this important program continues into the future. We all need to let our elected officials and agency personnel know that the RTP is important and that the state needs to make sure that there is enough money to administer the program.

### Statewide Trails Conference Excitement

Buzz is starting to build for Alaska Trails' 2014 Statewide Trails Conference, which will take place April 24-26 at Alaska Pacific University (APU) in Anchorage. The theme for the conference is: *Cooperation – Working Together to Build and Maintain Alaska's Trails*. The conference will bring together a diverse array of trail users from across the state to learn the latest in sustainable trail building and maintenance, trail advocacy and many other trail topics. There will be built-in time for networking.

Alaska Trails is making a special effort to outreach to the health community, to show the links between a robust trails system and individual health. This dovetails nicely with Alaska Trails' research into the economic benefits of trails. Troy Duffin of Alpine Trails in Utah will be a keynote speaker for the event, focusing on his work to make sure that trails were not only included but highlighted in development plans. Many may remember his presentations at the conference back in 2006. We are excited to have Troy at the upcoming conference.

The Conference Planning committee has met three times and we are putting together a great agenda for April. Please be in touch with any ideas you may have for the conference. Our website will soon be updated with the conference program, registration and other information.

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### PEOPLE NEED TO SPEAK OUT TO SAVE TRAIL FUNDING IN ALASKA

Trail advocates across Alaska need to take action to save the most important trail funding source in the state.

Gov. Sean Parnell has not yet committed to funding the administration of the Recreational Trails Program. The RTP funnels about \$1.5 million toward trails in Alaska each year. If the state does not pay for administering the RTP, the money will go back to the federal government. This federal program, which is paid for by gas tax from off-road vehicles, has been instrumental in funding trail projects throughout the state.

#### LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

If you care about trails in Alaska please write the governor and urge him to fully fund administration of the RTP. You can send a letter, (P.O. Box 110001 Juneau, AK 99811-0001), give his office a call (907/465-3500), or send him an email (<http://tinyurl.com/22umy43>).

From 2006 until last year RTP administrative costs were partially defrayed by money from the Alaska Trails Initiative (ATI), a federal program first championed by former Senator Ted Stevens. However, money from the ATI has been spent and now it's up to the state to fully cover the costs, as it did before 2006.

In order to continue the program in Alaska, the governor needs to commit to funding a grant administrator, a program coordinator, an accounting technician, and a part-time GIS specialist.

The program faced an earlier crisis due to legislation changes that came in 2012 when Congress allowed governors to opt out of the program each year. Opting out means the states still get the funds, but they can be diverted to other transportation projects, like highways.

Governor Parnell chose not to opt out of the program, but that won't help if the program administration is not funded.

In July, Alaska Trails sent a letter to Gov. Parnell, signed by a dozen trail groups across the state, urging him to continue accepting the RTP and to pay for its administration. While the governor did not opt out of the program, he still has not committed to funding its administration. Please let your voice be heard.

If you do contact the governor, don't forget to mention all the benefits of trails and the RTP, such as increased tourism, healthier citizens, protection of green spaces, access to natural resources, and a 25 percent funding match requirement that leverages even more money for trails. The return on the governor's investment is huge.



Below is a partial listing of trail projects recently funded or partially funded by the RTP:

- Reconstruction of the first section of the Eska West ATV Trail near Chickaloon
- Happy Valley (Ester Dome) Singletrack Trails
- Improvements to the Tsalteshi Trails in Soldotna
- Layout and construction of the Greenbelt Central Singletrack in the Mat-Su Valley
- Trailhead parking lot construction for Isberg Recreation Area near Fairbanks
- Construction of the Pullen Creek Stream Walk in Skagway
- Construction of Kincaid Singletrack Trails
- Construction of the Girdwood Nordic Ski Trails
- Construction of the Mastodon Trail Project in the Chena River State Recreation Area.
- Rehabilitation of the Treadwell Ditch Trail near Juneau

*(Photo by Mike Mathers of bikers on RTP-funded Compeau Trail in the Chena River State Recreation Area.)*

## BLM EXTENDS COMMENT PERIODS FOR TWO PLANS

The Bureau of Land Management has extended comment periods for two Resource Management Plans (RMP) due to the recent federal government shutdown. The scoping periods for both the Central Yukon RMP and the Bering Sea Western Interior RMP are now open until January 17, 2014. Public meetings for the plans will be held in December. For more information see the websites of the Central Yukon RMP (<http://tinyurl.com/kcjlpro>) and the Bering Sea Western Interior RMP (<http://tinyurl.com/mq3ydul>) or just go the BLM Alaska home page ([www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html)).

## FORAKER GROUP OFFERS CLASSES FOR NON-PROFITS STATEWIDE

The Foraker Group, which is dedicated to strengthening Alaska's non-profits, offers classes about the proper workings of non-profit groups, which include many trail and trail user groups. If you are a member or employee of a non-profit group consider taking one of the classes, which are offered in several communities and statewide by teleconference. For more information visit the Foraker Group website ([www.forakergroup.org/](http://www.forakergroup.org/)) or call 907/743-1200 or (toll free) 877/834-5003.



## KEEP TRACK OF STATE LAND USE PLANS FOR IMPACT ON TRAILS



The state Department of Natural Resources has several plans and studies underway across the state that affect how the state deals with its lands. Often this includes land and water trails. These plans and studies have opportunities for public comment. Take a look at the planning web page for the Division of Land, Water, and Mining (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/>). If you see a plan or study that affects trails important to you, please look into opportunities for public comment.

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- Trails are well represented in all categories in the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2014 election. Voting will close at midnight on December 4: <http://tinyurl.com/lbl2nmw>
- 300 miles across Alaska's North Slope to the Arctic Ocean: <http://tinyurl.com/lz87725>
- An argument by Craig Medred for getting kids moving (including on trails): <http://tinyurl.com/kalg3o6>
- Argentina to Alaska on horses, much of the trip on trails: <http://tinyurl.com/knh2hmf>
- Outdoor Explorer: Long-Range Snow Machine Expeditions: <http://tinyurl.com/oo4tmpk>

## STATEWIDE TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

Alaska Public Lands Update: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa/>  
State Parks' Eagle Watch: <http://tinyurl.com/qxdcshg>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### NEW FACEBOOK PAGE HIGHLIGHTS FAIRBANKS AREA TRAILS



Someone has started a new Facebook page called "Fairbanks Area Trail Conditions." It was started on November 25 and some interesting posts were up within a couple of hours. In one about fatbikers using Alaska Dog Mushing Association Trails, Josh Spice talked about the need for bikers to "ride all over the trail, not just in the same track down the center, in order to not create a rut that can hurt dogs and to help evenly pack the trail all across its width." Another talked about a dog that was caught

in a leg-hold trap on a trail between Coyote Trail and Howling Dog Trail roads in the Goldstream Valley area. Other posts had information and questions about trails and trail conditions.

See the website at: <https://www.facebook.com/fairbankstrails>

## CORRIDOR PREPPED FOR STILES CREEK EXTENSION TRAIL NEXT YEAR

Work is continuing on a realignment of the Stiles Creek Extension Trail in the Chena River State Recreation Area. The northern office of the State Parks and Recreation has cleared a corridor and will begin dirt work next summer. The office hopes to have the trail finished by the fall.

The 4.5-mile realignment of the motorized multi-use trail will move it from a fall-line alignment to one that will have grades no more than 8 percent. The old trail was unsafe and too steep to groom in the winter. About six years ago, a rider on a 4-wheeler was injured when he flipped his machine on the trail.

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 loop option to the Stiles Creek Trail. State parks is considering building a public use cabin along the extension, though no definite plans have been set.

Fixing the trail is the last in a series of projects to realign or otherwise repair motorized multi-use trails in the recreation area that were not originally built to modern, sustainable standards.

*(From Brooks Ludwig email; Park Specialist Brian Charlton on the new trail corridor; photo from State Parks.)*



## VOLUNTEERS CLEAR TREES FROM AREA TRAILS AFTER STORM



After a winter storm created havoc in the Interior in November, volunteers and employees came out in hordes to help clear local trails.

The popular Jim Whisenant Trails at Birch Hill Recreation Area probably saw the largest group of volunteers. The storm hit mid-week and volunteer work parties were organized for Friday and Saturday. Only a few people showed up on Friday, but on Saturday more than 70 people showed up to help clear the trails. More than a dozen trees, some more than 18 inches in diameter, had fallen across the trails, which were also strewn with debris from trees that stayed up. The clean up was so well organized that the volunteer crews, which

gathered at 9 am, were thanked and sent home just after noon. Some lights and light cables were torn down or otherwise damaged in the storm. Those might remain that way until next summer, so some trails, such as Roller Coaster, may not be lighted as they have been in past winters.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks trails were also hit hard by the storm. More than 50 trees, big and small, were in and across the trails. UAF crew pretty much had everything cleared up by Saturday. Some lights were damaged by the storm and will be repaired as soon as possible.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner did a story about the trail clearing efforts: <http://tinyurl.com/kudqbmj>

According to the new Facebook page "Fairbanks Area Trail Conditions," Cort Zachel cleared some big trees that were blocking the O'Connor Creek Trail.

*(Photo by Eric Troyer)*

## SURVEY TO HELP IMPROVE ESTER DOME SINGLE TRACK TRAILS

The managers of the Happy Valley Singletrack Trails (also known as the Ester Dome Singletrack Trails) have put together a survey to help them better understand who is using the trails and how to better manage them.

The Happy Valley Singletrack Trails are set of trails, consisting of three loops, on the east side of Ester Dome. They are accessed mainly by a parking lot about a mile up Ester Dome Road on the left side of the road. The loops are of different lengths: 6 miles, 3 miles long, and three-quarters of a mile.

See the survey at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/5VLSDCP](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5VLSDCP)

## INTERIOR LINK

- Wild & Scenic Film Festival comes to Fairbanks: <http://tinyurl.com/qzk7832>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### MEETING WILL DISCUSS GLENN HIGHWAY/MULDOON ROAD INTERSECTION

A public scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 3, from 6 to 8pm to discuss the Glenn Highway/Muldoon Road interchange needs in Anchorage. The meeting will be held at Bartlett High School Level 2 - Yellow Cafeteria, 1101 North Muldoon Road and will include a presentation at 6:30.

The purpose of the project is to increase safety and circulation for both cars and nonmotorized traffic and to make it easier for freight trucks to travel through the interchange. The goal is to develop and implement a long-term solution to address vehicle and pedestrian traffic concerns within the interchange area.

The proposed work would include: reconfiguring ramp layouts to improve interchange operations; increasing north-south capacity on Muldoon Road; **upgrading pedestrian facilities**; and upgrading the interchange to meet current geometric standards.

For more information, contact Rachel Steer, Public Involvement Manager (907/562-2000; [glennmuldoon@dowhkm.com](mailto:glennmuldoon@dowhkm.com)) or go to [www.glennmuldoon.com](http://www.glennmuldoon.com).

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

### MEETING WILL EXPLORE SELDON AND LUCILLE ROAD UPGRADES

An open house will be held on December 4 from 6 to 8pm to discuss the Seldon and Lucille Upgrades Project in Wasilla. The meeting will be held at Tanaina Elementary, 2550 N Lucille St.

The purpose of the meeting is to present the proposed design for the project and discuss the potential right-of-way needs. The project limits along Seldon Road begin at Wards Road and extend east to Kintrye Lane. The project limits along Lucille Street begin at Spruce Avenue and extend north to Lochcarron Drive.

Proposed improvements within the project corridor consist of: reconstruction and widening of the entire roadway; improving the intersection and approaches of the Seldon Road and Lucille Street intersection; improving access to Tanaina Elementary School, **constructing a non-motorized multi-use pathway along Seldon Road and reconstructing the pathway along Lucille Street** in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines; improving drainage, and acquiring right-of-way for construction improvements.

For more information see [www.brooks-alaska.com/seldonrd](http://www.brooks-alaska.com/seldonrd) or contact Anne Brooks, Public Involvement Coordinator (1-866/535-1877; [mycomments@brooks-alaska.com](mailto:mycomments@brooks-alaska.com)).

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

### VALLEY TRAILS GROUP TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING

The Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers's Annual Meeting & Party will be held in Palmer on Saturday, December 7. The event will be held at Backcountry Bike & Ski, 132 W. Arctic Ave and starts at 5pm.

People are invited to the annual get together for the group's volunteers, members and supporters. There will be live music by the Alaska Gypsies, plus food and beverages. For more information, see

[www.vmbah.org/index.php](http://www.vmbah.org/index.php).

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

## STATE CONDUCTING SUSITNA RIVER RECREATIONAL USER SURVEY

The State of Alaska has contracted with URS / Environmental Resources Management (ERM) to conduct a survey of individuals recreating on the Susitna River. This survey is part of the environmental studies being conducted for the proposed Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project.

To take the survey, go to: [www.susitnariversurvey.com](http://www.susitnariversurvey.com). Respondents completing a survey will be entered into a drawing for a \$250 gift certificate redeemable at Amazon.com or Cabela's. Your responses to the survey will be kept completely confidential. If you have any questions about completing this survey please contact Erik Steimle at [erik.steimle@erm.com](mailto:erik.steimle@erm.com).

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

## NEW SUPERINTENDENT CHOSEN FOR KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK



Rebecca R. Lasell has been selected as the new superintendent of Kenai Fjords National Park near Seward. The park has both water and land trails.

Lasell has been the Bureau of Land Management's district manager of resources, responsible for providing oversight and guidance for 11 million acres and five field offices of the BLM's California Desert District. She also brings a national land management perspective from her service in Washington, D.C., working with BLM's budget and resource programs, including the Cultural and Paleontological Resources and Tribal Consultation. Lasell has also served on the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, where she worked to build relationships among federal and state agencies.

(From *What's Up?* by Peg Tileston; photo from [sewardcitynews.com](http://sewardcitynews.com))

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- The Kachemak Bay Water Trail named trail of the month in *Conservation + Recreation*: <http://tinyurl.com/n5duuxf>
- Halloween Hustle inaugurates new multi-use trail in Homer area: <http://tinyurl.com/mu8m5nm>
- Outdoor Explorer looks into the history of the Crow Pass Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/knb4fsv>
- More trail options available for recreational use on Kenai Peninsula: <http://tinyurl.com/mm3edr>
- Loose dogs a danger on local Soldotna trails: <http://tinyurl.com/l36beyc>
- Alaska Huts reservations are now on-line: <http://www.alaskahuts.org>
- Matanuska Greenbelt now has almost 100 posts with almost 300 signs: <http://tinyurl.com/m5rnpff>
- Outdoor Explorer takes a look at public-use cabins, mostly in Southcentral: <http://tinyurl.com/lfmuftw>
- Tree thinning for fire prevention will make trails a bit more scenic: <http://tinyurl.com/ohm5h7o>

## SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

### KETCHIKAN PARKS CITIZENS BOARD RECRUITING A NEW MEMBER

Applications are being accepted through Dec 10 for a vacancy on the Ketchikan State Parks Citizen Advisory Board. To apply for a position on the nine-member board, please use the form provided at <http://tinyurl.com/3hfpf99>. Applicants will be considered for the term beginning Jan. 1.

The board meets on a monthly basis from September through May. Members are expected to occasionally serve on board-appointed committees in addition to attending the monthly board meetings. Board members serve for three years and terms are staggered so that seats open each year.

The role of the board is to advise the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation on matters effecting state parks in the Ketchikan area. The board promotes the protection of the area state parks' natural and cultural resources, and facilitates communication between the public and park managers.

For more information, please contact the Ketchikan District state park office at 907-247-8574.

(11/25/2013)

(From DPOR website)

## SOUTHEAST LINKS

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- Dog owners, trappers come together for "Sharing Juneau's Trails" presentation: <http://tinyurl.com/n3mxfjz>
- Carstensen releases book on Juneau trails: <http://tinyurl.com/pzas2xh>
- DOT project would add 'cycle tracks' to Egan Drive: <http://tinyurl.com/qgj8g87>
- On the Trails: Wanderings in early November: <http://tinyurl.com/p26mzvc>
- On the Trails: Cranberries: <http://tinyurl.com/lwspzny>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### NATIONWIDE LINKS

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

#### RECENT TRAILS E-NEWSLETTERS

- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (November 2013): <http://tinyurl.com/lfa95ua>
- American Trails (November 2013): <http://tinyurl.com/lfjkhog>
- National Park Service's *Conservation + Recreation* (October): <http://tinyurl.com/n5duuxf>

#### OTHER LINKS:

- Britain is experimenting with a glowing, seemingly self-aware bike path: <http://tinyurl.com/luo2g8v>
- Do trail (running) races result in unnecessary damage to the environment?: <http://tinyurl.com/kxquarj>
- 10 best urban hiking trails in America: <http://tinyurl.com/o3t25do>
- Elements for a good trail contract (also good for writing trail grants): <http://tinyurl.com/khp2g6u>
- Arizona User Groups Cooperate And Compete On Trail Day: <http://tinyurl.com/nodj86n>
- Smartphone app gets some blame for illegal trails near San Diego: <http://tinyurl.com/kq2zclh>

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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 March, June, September, and December. 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)