

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

TRIP PLANNING NEEDS TO INCLUDE A CHECK OF FIRE CLOSURES, BANS

Recent hot weather and wildfires have caused trail and road closures and fire bans across the state. These closures and bans are being lifted as conditions improve. Please check for any closures and bans before heading out on trail trips.

Since conditions can change rapidly, the best way to get accurate information is to call the office of the land manager of the area you want to visit. Good sources of information include:

- Alaska State Parks' Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AlaskaStateParks
- Alaska State Parks' Current Events page: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>
- BLM 's home page: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html>
- US Forest Service home page: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/r10>

RULING FORCES STATE TO CHANGE ADMIN COST POLICY ON RTP GRANTS

Administrative and other indirect costs of trail projects can now be paid for by Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grants, a change from a State Parks policy set just a few months ago that would have disallowed reimbursement for those costs.

The reversal came about because of a recent policy change by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that affects funding for all nonprofit groups.

In short, this is good news for those applying for RTP grants because they don't have to find additional funding to pay for indirect costs of RTP-funded projects. The National Council of Nonprofits praised the new policy change in an article on its website.

"The new guidance means that nonprofits should be able to focus more on their missions and should be under less pressure to raise additional funds to essentially subsidize governments."

According to the article, the new policy "explicitly requires pass-through entities (typically states and local governments receiving federal funding) and all federal agencies to reimburse a nonprofit's indirect costs by applying the nonprofit's federally negotiated indirect cost rate, if one already exists. If a negotiated rate does not yet exist, then nonprofits are empowered either to request negotiating a rate or to elect the default rate of 10 percent of their modified total direct costs." (See the full article here: <http://tinyurl.com/pq77cpo>).

In an email explaining how the change affects RTP grants, Darcy Harris, state trails coordinator, used an example of a \$50,000 grant. Up to \$5,000 could be used for administrative and other indirect costs.

"This being said it is very important that grantees understand that all project management, project administration, administrative supplies, executive director management time, planning or designing time, and other indirect costs would come out of that \$5,000. Of course, a grantee does not have to ask for indirect costs, they can opt to put all the money into building their trail," Harris wrote.

State Parks had earlier decided to disallow indirect costs. For one, doing so would keep Alaska in line with "the policy of the majority of other states that administer the program," Harris wrote in an email explaining the reasoning. The policy change would have also focused "as much of the public money as possible for actual trail work to benefit the general public," Harris wrote.

Before that change, State Parks had allowed up to 7 percent of an RTP grant to be used for indirect costs. This was a state policy that was allowed by the federal government at the time.

The new order from the Office of Management and Budget, titled Super-Circular: 2 CFR 200, was issued in late December, but it took a while for Alaska officials to determine whether a state could reject the indirect cost allowance for RTP grants. (See the OMB order here: <http://tinyurl.com/nxawgds>.)

BIG STAFF CHANGES WITH THE ALASKA OFFICE OF THE RTCA

An important National Park Service trails program in Alaska is going through some big personnel changes.

Paul Clark was recently hired as the new regional program leader of the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program in Alaska. Clark replaces Lisa Holzapfel, who retired this past January (see story in March issue). Heather Rice, the other RTCA employee in Alaska, recently announced she is leaving Alaska to take another NPS job in Colorado after 16 years in Alaska. She has worked with RTCA since 2007.

NPS-RTCA is a nationwide program that provides free, on-location facilitation and planning expertise for locally-led outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation projects. Projects are selected each year through an application process. To find out more about the program see:

<http://www.nps.gov/akso/community/rtca/index.cfm>

While no drastic changes are planned for the program, the personnel changes will affect how the program is run in Alaska. In an email, Clark described 2016 as a “transition and learning year.”

“I expect to take on less of a project workload in 2016 than the program has carried in previous years,” Clark wrote. “Along with learning about the RTCA program and the National Park Service in general, my priority will be to work with NPS leadership to hire behind Heather, and also look for other ways to leverage support and resources for the RTCA program in Alaska.”

Clark also pointed out that new people bring “different skills and experience.”

“This may guide the types of projects where we can be of most help,” Clark wrote. “Much of what RTCA provides will stay the same, however, such as providing guidance on strategic planning, organizing stakeholders, and project planning.”

Clark comes from the Chugach National Forest, where he was the forest recreation planner and trails program manager, an Anchorage-based position he held for five years. Prior to that he was a Presidential Management Fellow with the Chugach National Forest in Girdwood, primarily serving as the project coordinator for a partnership recreation project between the Alaska Railroad and the USDA Forest Service. He also currently serves on the Alaska Trails board of directors.

Before joining the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska, Clark spent two years (2005-2007) with the Peace Corps in Fiji working on community-based conservation projects, and five years as an Army and Army National Guard officer. He received a B.A. in history from Pacific Lutheran University in 1999 and a M.S. in resource conservation from the University of Montana in 2008. In his free time, Clark enjoys trail running, cross country skiing, and trying to keep up with his wife and two-year-old son.

Clark will officially join the regional office in Anchorage in early July. He can be reached at [907-644-3586](tel:907-644-3586).

“Even during this transition period, I encourage people to contact me about project ideas and to learn more about the RTCA program,” Clark wrote.

Rice is leaving the Alaska RTCA after accepting a new position with the National Park Service in the Lower 48. She will be working as a compliance specialist in the NPS Intermountain Regional Office in Lakewood, Colorado.

“As excited as I am about the new job, I will be very sad to leave the RTCA program and the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people who have dedicated their time and energy and passion to making their communities better places to live,” Rice wrote in an email.

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS PROGRAM SURVIVES BUDGET CUTS

Funding for the state Snowmobile Trails Program, originally cut from the state budget, has been restored, according to State Trails Coordinator Darcy Harris. Nothing about the program has been changed including deadlines. That means the due date for the public notice, June 10, has already passed. The application due date is still July 1.

The Snowmobile Trail Program has two main parts. One is the Grooming Pool, which pays for grooming and marking of snowmachine trails in a variety of places in interior and southcentral Alaska, as well as the Juneau area. The other part of the program provides grants for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use, and for safety and educational programs. Matching funds are required for all except the safety and educational programs.

While this is a snowmachine specific program, winter trail grooming benefits any winter users who use those trails. Trail easement acquisition, trail maintenance, and trail-related facilities can benefit other trail users, even in summer.

Funding for the Snowmobile Trails Program comes from registration fees paid by snowmobile owners. However, the program is not guaranteed each year and must be included in the state budget. If the program had been cut the money would have been dispersed into the state's general fund.

The state Department of Natural Resources decides how to distribute the Snowmobile Trail Program funds, but it is guided by the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC), which reviews funding requests and makes recommendations.

For more information on the program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>

CHANGES PROPOSED FOR CHUGACH, CHILKAT STATE PARKS

Alaska State Parks is seeking comment on proposed regulation changes relating to public use in Chugach State Park in Southcentral near Anchorage and Chilkat State Park in Southeast near Haines.

The proposed changes for Chugach State Park include seasonal use of ATVs in Bird Valley, inclusion of llamas and alpacas under the same consideration as horses, and the definition of fat tire bicycles and where they may be used.

The proposed change for Chilkat State Park would allow for the discharge of a weapon for the purpose of lawful hunting and trapping.

Comments on these changes must be received no later than 5pm on July 31.

To comment and find out more information see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/proposedregulations.htm>

SNOWTRAC BOARD SEEKS APPLICANTS; DEADLINE JUNE 30

June 30 is the deadline for applications for the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SNOWTRAC). The nine-member board has three vacancies, one of which represents the Kenai Peninsula, Valdez and Prince William Sound, and the other two seats representing Western Alaska and Southeast Alaska. The terms for these positions will expire February 28, 2018.

SnowTRAC members assist the division director by providing a diverse and informed analysis of grant proposals and by making funding recommendations for the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program. This statewide grant program provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use.

To be considered for an appointment to the SnowTRAC, please submit a letter of interest that describes your professional background and snowmobile interests, experience, and knowledge, and three professional references to Darcy Harris, the State Trails Program Coordinator, via email at darcy.harris@alaska.gov or call [907-269-8699](tel:907-269-8699) or Fax materials to [907-269-8907](tel:907-269-8907). For additional information regarding SnowTRAC or the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program, go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>.

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

JUST ONE MONTH TO APPLY FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSISTANCE

Do you have an idea for an outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation project in your community? If so, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program can help.

Applications for RTCA assistance for this next fiscal year (Oct 2015–Sept 2016), are due no later than August 1. All sorts of organizations may apply, including local, state, federal and tribal governments, nonprofits and unincorporated groups. (Federal applications must have at least one non-federal committed partner.)

RTCA offers assistance on locally-led outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation projects. The program offers expertise to move your project from conception to completion, but program employees count on your leadership, drive, commitment, and enthusiasm to carry out the project.

To learn more about RTCA and how it can help, go to the program's Alaska webpage at <http://go.nps.gov/alaska/rtca>.

People interested in applying should contact Heather Rice, Alaska RTCA Outdoor Recreation Planner, at [907-644-3587](tel:907-644-3587) before the August 1 application deadline to discuss your proposed project.

(From Heather Rice, RTCA)

STATE RECRUITING FOR OUTDOOR REC BOARD POSITION

People interested in serving on the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) have until August 1 to apply.

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation seeks candidates to fill one open board position, which represents people experiencing disabilities. Applicants should have special knowledge, experience, or interest in outdoor recreation and accessibility needs for all trail users.

If you would like to be considered for appointment on the ORTAB, please submit a letter of interest, brief resume and completed questionnaire (available at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/ortaboard.htm>) to the State Trails Program Coordinator, Darcy Harris (darcy.harris@alaska.gov; 907/269-8699; fax 907/269-8907).

Board members serve a term of three years and the board meets once per year or as needed. Additional information regarding ORTAB and the Recreational Trail Grant program can be found at www.alaskastatetrails.org.

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Amendment 16 to the 2012-2015 STIP is open for public comment until July 15: <http://tinyurl.com/q3ovjnw>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Denali Highway & Tangle Lakes: <http://tinyurl.com/nf2zucq>
- A new multisport race in Alaska, this year in Southcentral: <http://expeditionak.com>

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- National Trails Day in Denali National Park: <http://tinyurl.com/pubnjc6>
- Ester trail expert blazes path around Alaska: <http://tinyurl.com/omrguof>
- Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System, Late Spring newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/npdnt85>
- Twelve adventurous competitors tackle 100-mile Alaskacross course: <http://tinyurl.com/pnezlyo>
- Chena Lake herbicide proposal draws no opposition: <http://tinyurl.com/nkkut7t>

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 were upgraded recently and 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 on masthead).

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS BACKCOUNTRY PLAN

Open House Meetings scheduled for Backcountry/Wilderness Stewardship Plan for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park And Preserve will be held in the following locations:

- June 30 – Anchorage from 6:30 to 9pm at the Campbell Creek Science Center
- July 1 – Valdez from 5 to 8pm in the Valdez City Library

Together, the park and preserve form the largest national park area in the country. It contains the most designated wilderness – about 9.76 million acres – of any area, and has an additional 1.5 million acres of “eligible” wilderness that will be considered in the planning work. Access is largely by airplane, although a few hiking routes extend off the McCarthy Road corridor.

The general management plan for Wrangell-St. Elias was written in 1986, and the work beginning this summer will amend portions of that plan. Park staff expects the Backcountry/Wilderness Stewardship plan will cover these main areas:

- Develop management indicators and standards that reflect backcountry and wilderness condition. These indicators and standards will be measurable and will trigger the need for management actions.
- Provide management actions that work towards desired conditions.
- Identify management tools to address recreational and commercial uses and provide for customary and traditional subsistence activities.

For more information please contact Bruce Rogers at [\(907\)-822-7276](tel:907-822-7276) or go to <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/documentsList.cfm?parkID=21&projectID=44299>.

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

WASILLA HEADWATERS TRAIL BRIDGES TO BE REPLACED, REPAIRED

Traveling by ATV on the Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail within Matanuska Valley Moose Range should get safer and easier thanks to work being done by the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District.

The district is repairing three ATV timber bridges, including relocating one bridge, and building three wider ATV timber bridges adjacent to the three existing bridges, according to Chuck Kaucic, manager of the conservation district.

The three existing bridges are 7-8 years old and are still sound, but they were not built to adequately handle side-by-side ATVs, which can barely squeeze through the side rails. To handle wider vehicles, three wider bridges will be built adjacent to the existing ones.

The work will require temporary crossing closures. The goal is to have the work done by October.

The trail is not among the more widely known ATV trails in the Mat-Su Valley but is getting more use. The trail has two trailheads: One is located at the end of Wendt Road, off Palmer Fishhook Road; Glenn Highway

milepost 49.5. The other is located at mile 1 on Murphy Road off Buffalo Mine Road; Glenn Highway milepost 53. More information can be found in the Matanuska River Watershed Recreation and Trails Plan:

<http://tinyurl.com/nfp4dfv>

ADVICE OFFERED ON WEATHER AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

"Wild Weather In The Wilderness" will be discussed at the Campbell Creek Science Center at 7pm on July 8.

Alaska is a state where outdoor fun is predictable but the weather is not. David Snider from the National Weather Service will share advice for maximizing your enjoyment of the outdoors by being prepared for any type of weather. Bring the whole family out for a lightning strike of a good time that will flood your senses and blow you away with fun!

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Outdoor Explorer (radio show): History of Anchorage's Trails and Greenbelts: <http://tinyurl.com/nny76u4>
- The Kachemak Bay Water Trail has a new website: www.kachemakbaywatertrail.org
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing, preserving and protecting the resources of Kachemak Bay State Park: www.friendsofkachemakbay.org
- First edition of *BikeLife Anchorage* includes "Iconic Trails of Anchorage": <http://tinyurl.com/oxhqcu>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SENATE INTRODUCES SIX-YEAR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BILL

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee announced the new bill titled the "Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act." (DRIVE) The legislation would maintain "Transportation Alternatives" funding, which includes trails and bike/ped programs, at \$850 million a year, up from the current \$819 million. The Recreational Trails Program continues as a "set-aside" fund within the Transportation Alternatives. Trail advocates believe the transportation bill is a win as it keeps funding for state trails grants intact.

- Read the full text of the bill as introduced: <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/EPW-DRIVE-transportation-bill-text.pdf>
- Read an analysis by the League of American Bicyclists: www.bikeleague.org/content/analysis-drive-act

(From American Trails "Supporting Trails" page)

ASK YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO JOIN THE TRAILS CAUCUS

It's official - the new Congress has a Trails Caucus. The mission of the caucus is to provide a forum for members of Congress to work together for the creation and conservation of our natural landscape and recreation activities through the preservation of trails. The co-chairs (for whom we are very grateful and who deserve our applause) are Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR), Fortenberry (R-NE), Nolan (D-MN), and Graves (R-GA).

What the American Hiking Society asks *you* to do is to email or call your representative in Congress, tell them that trails are important to you, and that you would like them to consider becoming a member of the Trails Caucus. It would be great if you could mention a particular trail you enjoy that is in his or her district.

Be sure to let them know that to join the Caucus, they can just contact Paul Balmer in Rep. Blumenauer's office at x(5-4811) or Alan Feyerherm in Rep. Fortenberry's office at x(5-4806).

(In Alaska we have just one district and one representative: Rep. Don Young. Contact him here:

<http://donyoung.house.gov/contact/>)

(From American Hiking Society's newsletter Paperless Trail.)

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

WEBINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- For a listing of upcoming trail webinars workshops, conferences, and other meetings, see the American Trails calendar at: www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html

ADVOCACY

- Groups urge Congress to continue funding of trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ogmupzn>

STUDIES AND REPORTS

- Community and Economic Benefits of Bicycling in Michigan: <http://tinyurl.com/pjqkglv>
- The road (and pedestrian/bike facilities) that rebuilt a neighborhood: <http://tinyurl.com/nz6ccnw>
- White Paper: Evaluating the Economic Benefits of Nonmotorized Transportation: <http://tinyurl.com/o7y6tde>
- Active cities 'boost bottom lines': www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-33065010

GRANTS

- Video: Bell Built \$100k winner announced: <http://tinyurl.com/nlof8nc>

RECENT TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS/MAGAZINES

- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (June): <http://tinyurl.com/oqldzl3>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Take a hike: 10 favorite South Carolina trails: www.thestate.com/news/local/article23090127.html
- Best state in America: Pennsylvania, for turning old rails into trails: <http://tinyurl.com/p7h7ge8>
- National Trails Day: 15 spectacular hikes around the USA: <http://tinyurl.com/nwy9cu>
- Secretary Jewell, NPS head Jarvis Announce 10 New National Recreation Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/qax94a3>
- Federal Judge Slaps BLM for Trails Mismanagement in California: <http://tinyurl.com/ntzx7b6>
- Yosemite's 10 Best Hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/p59lpav>
- From fast and flowy to techy and tough, Oakridge, Oregon, has it all: <http://tinyurl.com/p8hx9gj>
- Smartphone App Now Shows Interactive Map of South Dakota Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/pdsqcwm>
- Coalition for Recreational Trails' 2015 Annual Achievement Awards: <http://tinyurl.com/qat-smvc>
- Chester County, PA, To Post Speed Limit Markers On Some Of Its Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/nduupzj>
- The Daily Bike: A Look at the Ban on Wilderness Mountain Biking: <http://tinyurl.com/o8mrxlo>
- Video (four high school students give back to trails for a senior project): <http://tinyurl.com/pgo4b3b>
- Hiking, Biking and Paddling Trails in the ADK (Adirondacks): <http://tinyurl.com/og2ocgw>
- Economy growing along Northeast US trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ow9wsv2>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

- Hindustan trekking trails for every level of enthusiast: <http://tinyurl.com/nk2mkrc>
- Conservation Volunteers International Program trail work trip: Torres del Paine National Park, Patagonia, Chile: <http://tinyurl.com/os7pna9>
- Western Australia mountain bike trails on track for world best: <http://tinyurl.com/np22q6a>
- Mountain Biking Video: The Puerto Inca Trail in Peru: <http://tinyurl.com/okzn3rb>
- Boots on! Five of the best multi-day hiking trails across Australia: <http://tinyurl.com/ono8ffh>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- On Balance, It's a Thrill: Mountain Unicyclists Take Trails One Wheel at a Time: <http://tinyurl.com/nvknu4r>

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

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