

ACTION UPDATE

November 2014

FAIRBANKS/ESTER AREA

VOLUNTEERS RESTORE GOLDSTREAM CREEK BRIDGE

A trail bridge across Goldstream Creek is back up. The bridge, which was put up in 2006, was washed downstream by this summer's flooding. The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner did a story on the effort to get the bridge restored. Here's the link: <http://tinyurl.com/kt3k9fq>

I also thought I would share the story below. It was from the first edition of the Interior Trails Quarterly in August 2006. It's impressive that this project was done without any major grants. Through the efforts of concerned trail users—then and now—this bridge remains an important trail connector in the Goldstream Valley.



(Photo of the bridge restoration project by Geoffrey Orth.)

COLLAPSED GOLDSTREAM TRAIL BRIDGE BEING REPLACED

A new trail bridge in the Goldstream Valley is being built to replace one that collapsed last winter. The collapsed bridge, which crossed Goldstream Creek, provided access for a multi-use trail that runs between the railroad crossing near Ann's Greenhouse on Sheep Creek Road and O'Brien Street near Goldstream General Store. That trail, an old homestead road, connects other trails that run south and north in Goldstream Valley, so it's an important bridge. Jeff Oates is spearheading the effort to replace the bridge. He has had help from a number of people, especially Leroy Moses and Joel Switzer. Some local trail-user groups and individuals have also donated money to the effort, but Jeff has put a lot of his own time and money into the project.

The new bridge is made of steel and is at the site, but the decking needs to be put on it and the bridge abutments need to be leveled. Not much work has been done on the bridge this summer, but Jeff plans to start work on it in September or October. If you would like to donate time or money to the project call Jeff at 455-6834.

Once the bridge is finished please don't put too much weight on it at one time, especially in late winter when the snow pack builds up. The better we treat the bridge, the longer it will last.

The story in the News-Miner also prompted this note and photo from Tom McGrane, sent out on the Alaska Dog Musers Association list serve. It refers to work done on the ADMA trails that fan out from the Musers Hall on Farmer's Loop Road.

Four years ago three of our volunteers put a bridge over a new washout on the now 6.2 mile turn. We hadn't been able to use that turn the previous year. It's still in good shape, although a couple of the small vertical supports may need replacing in the future. (The outbound before the turn, where there's been a sink-hole, did washout this summer and while it may have made the sink-hole itself better, an area east of there now has a bit of a ditch down its center.)



It was built with local trees (with the landowner's permission) and salvaged wood. Here's a re-thank you: --Tom

LAWSUITS TO PROTECT ESTER TRAILS GETS ATTENTION

Two lawsuits filed to protect access to Ester area trails have been given more support and some attention. Both lawsuits were filed by Geoffrey Orth, an Ester resident and trail user, who was dissatisfied with how the Fairbanks North Star Borough administration was dealing with the situations. Landowners had blocked or threatened to block the trails.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner had a story on the lawsuit filed to protect the Eva Creek Trail. It was recently settled. Read the story here: <http://tinyurl.com/m6jxpjv>

The other lawsuit was filed to protect access to Ester Valley Road, which gives access to several trails, including the Ester West Ridge Trail and the Tri-Con Mine Road (more trail than road). Orth has been soliciting donations to help pay for the lawsuit. The Fairbanks Cycle Club recently donated a substantial sum. The message below was sent to the Fairbanks Cycle Club list serve. It was also posted on the club's website: www.fairbankscycleclub.org.

The FCC board voted to approve a \$5400 dollar donation to help fund the legal effort to protect access to trails through Ester Valley.

Four multi-use trails (Fireplug, Willow Creek, Social Security and the Tri-Con Mine road) no longer have access through the valley, stemming from a dispute between miners. Geoff Orth has made a great case for preserving access to the trails through the valley (see below). He has put out several calls for financial help, and since "preservation of the sport of bicycling in Alaska" is in the club's by-laws, the opinion was that it was appropriate to make a donation. The board is proud to help out, and we hope you feel the same.

Geoff's Ester Valley Summary:

"This is a multi-use, multi-season trail/road providing critical access to public lands further west in Ester Valley and Ester Dome. The Ester Valley Trail/Road has existed since 1903, prior to any mining claims being staked, thus establishing a R.S. 2477 designation

(R.S. 2477 status creates a right-of-way before the land was private). In addition, there has been open and continuous recreational use by the public since the mid 1960s, thus creating a prescriptive easement (AS 09.45.052 (d)). There are also right-of-way easements in recorded warranty deeds. These are easements, granting public access, that the landowner cannot interfere with. The Largets, by blocking access, are in effect trying to privatize a public resource without going through a public process.

We have received funding from 51 sources, averaging \$970 each. For the record, my wife and I have contributed \$28,000.

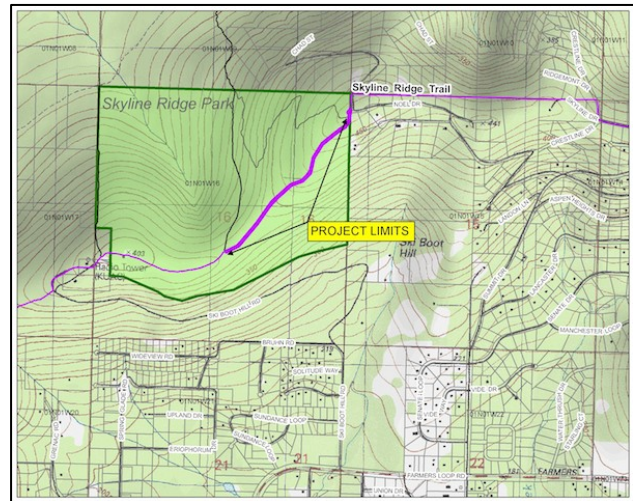
*Donations Received 57,603
Eva Creek Trail Legal Fees -9,082
Eva Creek Settlement Compensation 2,000
Ester Valley Trail Legal Fees -56,226
Current Balance \$-5,706*

If you wish to donate to help with the lawsuit contact Orth at gcorth@straydogs.us

SKYLINE RIDGE TRAIL SUBJECT OF GRANT APPLICATION

The Fairbanks Borough Parks and Recreation Department is applying for a state Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant to improve the Skyline Ridge Trail. The trail, which runs from Noel Drive to Ski Boot Hill Road, receives a lot of use and has become damaged over the years. It runs through a block of land that the borough plans to eventually designate as a low-key park.

RTP grant applications from across the state will be reviewed over the winter. Projects that are selected will be awarded grants next spring. A description of the proposed trail restoration project follows:



The Skyline Ridge Trail restoration project will complete the first phase of trail repairs addressing significant tread and trail erosion issues occurring within the Park. Work will begin at the Noel Drive trailhead and head southwest through the park. The project will use sustainable trail construction techniques to restore, repair, or reroute approximately 3,500 linear feet of the Skyline Ridge Trail. The Skyline Ridge Trail is identified in the Fairbanks North Star Borough's Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan as a primary trail corridor through the 470-acre park. Trail restoration to a sustainable standard will allow users a safe and fun trail experience while minimizing future maintenance requirements.

The existing alignment from the Noel Drive trailhead to the intersection with the Goldstream/Skyline Connector Trail is a fall-line trail which transitions to a saddle top trail. Water has and continues to erode the fall-line portion. Once on the saddle, water ponds due to a lack of cross slope. The ponds are becoming deeper as ATVs splash the mud to the shoulders, which further exacerbates the ponding. The goal of the project is to relocate the tread where necessary to provide adequate water management and drainage. The remaining sections will be repaired as necessary.

NEW NORDIC SKI TRAILS PLANNED FOR KOPONEN LAND

Friends of the Koponen Homestead is planning to have 1.6 miles of contour cross-country skiing trail built on the homestead, which sits between Chena Pump and Chena Ridge roads on the west side of Fairbanks.

The group has put out a Request for Qualification as part of the process of finding a trail-building contractor. The group is being selective, not wanting a contractor with little or no trail-building experience. Qualifications for the project include: at least three references from similar jobs; membership in the Professional Trail Builders Association or similar organization; 40 hrs of formal “sustainable” trail training; 10 miles of “sustainable” trail constructed; a mandatory pre-bid walk-through and interview; sufficient insurance; and proper licenses and bonding. The contractor will also have the proper equipment, including a minimum 80-horsepower trail dozer no wider than four feet and a minimum 15-horsepower mini-excavator no wider than 40 inches.

The project is planned for July 2015. The trail corridor will be cleared about seven feet wide with the final result being a five-foot-wide bench-cut trail. Interested contractors should submit by November 14 a cost-per-foot proposal that includes trail layout, corridor clearing and full-bench construction.

For the full RFQ package, please contact the project manager, Geoffrey Orth, at gcorth@straydogs.us.

FAIRBANKS PAPER ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO GET OUTSIDE

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner recently ran a package of stories in its Outdoors section aimed at getting people ready for winter recreation. Most of the stories had strong trail-related parts. Links to the stories are below:

- Fairbanks packed with winter recreation clubs and organizations: <http://tinyurl.com/n8jcgbyb>
- Play nice: Rules of the road for Fairbanks ski trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ngtd8hg>
- Alaska athletes Sonny Lindner and Nancy Fresco talk winter clothing from the base up: <http://tinyurl.com/m6tbor3>
- Take a day to ski or hike this winter around Fairbanks: <http://tinyurl.com/nd87g3k>
- 10 things to check off on your winter activities to-do list: <http://tinyurl.com/ltljmph>

INTERIORWIDE

APPLICATIONS DUE IN DECEMBER FOR LWCF GRANTS

December 5 is the deadline for preliminary applications Land And Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants. The federal LWCF program provides up to 50 percent matching funds for acquisition or development of parks and other outdoor recreation facilities, including trails. State, regional and local governments with the authority to provide park and recreation services on public lands are eligible to apply. The preliminary application package, including maps, an example budget, and rating criteria is available online at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/lwcf.htm> or by contacting Jean Ayers, the grants administrator (jean.ayers@alaska.gov; 907/269-8694).

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

SNOWTRAC GRANTS APPROVED FOR TRAIL GROOMING

More than \$200,000 will be divided among 17 organizations across the state for snowmobile trail grooming this winter. A total of \$218,858 will be allocated to the organizations from the Fairbanks, Mat-Su Kenai Peninsula and Juneau areas. In addition, \$15,000 set aside for a rural transportation safety project was not awarded this year. It will be offered again during next year's Snowmobile Trails Grant cycle starting April 1.

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation approved funding for the grooming after receiving input from the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC), a statewide citizen advisory board.

The Snowmobile Trail Grant Program offers competitive and reimbursable matching grants for developing and maintaining public snowmobile trails and related facilities and for safety, education, and trail signing projects. The Snowmobile Trail Grant Program's Grooming Pool provides funding for trail grooming, signing, and maintenance. The program is funded with money generated through snowmobile registration.

For more information contact Darcy Harris, trails program coordinator (907/269-8699; darcy.harris@alaska.gov).

PARK SERVICE PROGRAM INCLUDES TWO INTERIOR PROJECTS

The NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program in Alaska will be providing technical assistance to the following projects this fiscal year:

- Delta Junction Community Trails: Develop a community-wide trail system and organization to encourage health, tourism, and enhanced public safety while protecting public access to trails, land, and water.
- Fairbanks Peirce Park: Create the Peirce Park Living Lab – a place where community, stewardship, and science education meet, where students and community members have opportunities to learn and apply science, engineering, math, and the arts in a natural setting.

- Homer Poopdeck Platt Park: Develop the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust's Poopdeck Platt Park into a place of community pride recognized by all as a living example of how conservation connects people and the land.
- Homer Woodard Creek Coalition: Re-establish Woodard Creek as a prized community asset that will enhance conservation efforts, promote recreational outlets, protect against flooding hazards and enhance the quality of life for residents and tourists alike.
- Anchorage Youth Connections: Strategically expand the Anchorage Park Foundation's Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program to design and implement conservation projects such as trails and habitat restoration in neighborhoods of need.

For more information on this National Park Service program see:

www.nps.gov/akso/community/rtca/index.cfm

(From Lisa Holzapfel and Heather Rice)

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Advice I wish I'd had when learning to cross-country ski: <http://tinyurl.com/lmeqkor>
- Fall snowmachine checkup can prevent costly repairs: <http://tinyurl.com/nnta2w3>
- Mining company drops Fairbanks downhill ski area from exploration plan: <http://tinyurl.com/nshvlgz>

STATEWIDE

TAKE A SHORT SURVEY, MAYBE WIN A BOOK

Help Alaska Trails plan the 2015 Statewide Trails Conference AND be entered to win a copy of *Dirt Work – An Education in the Woods* by Christine Byl. Input from trail users and managers is important to the group as it plans the next conference. Please complete the brief, 10-question survey by November 15 to be eligible to win a great book. Here's the survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GBPH388>

INTERNSHIP HELPS STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREERS

The Alaska National Park Service Academy seeks qualified candidates for a 2015 Spring Break career development orientation and summer internship in Alaska. Learn about careers in natural and cultural resource management, biology, education, facilities management, engineering, field research, business, wildlife, multimedia production, trail crew, and more.

Applicants must be age 18-25; reside in Alaska; and identify as either under-represented, rural, or a racial/ethnic minority. Twenty selected members will spend Spring Break (March 15-21, 2015) at Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward. Travel, food, and lodging are included. Summer internships are based at Alaska national park sites in Denali, Anchorage, Katmai, Fairbanks, Lake Clark, Skagway, Sitka, Gates of the Arctic, and more. Summer interns will receive free travel and housing, a living allowance (\$160 to \$280 per

week), and most interns can be eligible for a \$1,400 AmeriCorps Education Award.

To apply: Thoroughly complete an application at <http://thesca.org/serve/program/nps-academy> -- including the Young Adult Conservation Internship portion. Email or call SCA Alaska recruiter Jeff Chen (jchen@thesca.org; 907/717-8414) for an application fee waiver. Applications and interviews are considered on a rolling basis through December 1. Early applicants will receive priority.

Learn more at <http://thesca.org/serve/young-adult-programs>.

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston)

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Trail breakers for the Copper Basin 300 (a Lego movie): <http://tinyurl.com/k486txn>
- A film about the 2001 Iditasport Extreme race: <http://vimeo.com/84178875>
- Recreational Trails Program applications are due Nov 15: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>
- An Alaskan Mountain Runner Exposed: Matias Saari: <http://tinyurl.com/k5ousno>
- Prospect of Donlin gold mine brings support, despite potential effect on Iditarod Trail:
- The Alaska Nordic Skier is now available online. The October issue (4.6MB) has several stories about work on cross-country ski trails around the state: <http://tinyurl.com/mu6wqfn>
- Take care of your hands so they can take care of you: <http://tinyurl.com/mycqujc>
- Alaska land access fights hinge on one word in 34-year-old law: <http://tinyurl.com/kmzoacg>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show
 - Winter Public Use Cabins: <http://tinyurl.com/m3q4nzq>
 - Sifting Through The Goods: Ski Swaps: <http://tinyurl.com/n4yzlz5>
 - Babies in the Elements: <http://tinyurl.com/ko9uovg>
 - Glacier Trekking: <http://tinyurl.com/q5ugswh>

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Application for Public Access Easement - Aurora Dog Mushing Trails south of Big Lake, Alaska (comments due Nov 3): <http://tinyurl.com/mvqnaes>
- IRS Volcanoes Traverse (definitely off-trail): <http://tinyurl.com/p5ub8fs>
- Two Lake Louise-area snowmachine trails being considered for public easements: <http://tinyurl.com/ngm3ybe>
- Tsalteshi Trails celebrates an exciting year: <http://tinyurl.com/osjgb9f>
- Anchorage Park Foundation newsletter (includes update on trail work under Youth Employment in Parks): <http://tinyurl.com/ljcsp4d>
- Capturing autumn, the fleeting season, on Kesugi Ridge: <http://tinyurl.com/p6mbp4t>
- Lost hiker survives 2 chilly nights in Alaska's Chugach State Park: <http://tinyurl.com/kptj25m>
- Notice regarding rehabilitating Girdwood pathway: <http://tinyurl.com/ov57cfs>

- Memories are found during hike to Lost Lake: <http://tinyurl.com/mgu63b2>
- Get outdoors, but do it with your fellow Anchorageites: <http://tinyurl.com/pezj5re>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/o7fnwe7>

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Public hearing charts course for Wrangell trails: <http://tinyurl.com/lsnjm45>
- Windfall Lake Trail improvements dubbed 'art': <http://tinyurl.com/ks47yp5>
- On the Trails: Porcupines: I'm stuck on you: <http://tinyurl.com/me668yy>
- Off the Beaten Path: Dogs of our lives: <http://tinyurl.com/lcwojqk>
- How I got my PFD one day early (really, it's about trails): <http://tinyurl.com/op7dsqv>

NATIONWIDE

AMERICAN TRAILS CONTEST DEADLINE APPROACHES

American Trails is sponsoring the 2014 National Recreation Trails Photo Contest.

The entry deadline is December 15, 2015. The contest has several categories. Its goal is to highlight the diversity of the trails and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails.

For more information on the photo contest see: <http://tinyurl.com/p5ku38v>

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS DUE

There are two processes for nominating National Recreation Trails. One with a deadline and one without:

November 1 is the deadline for trails on land administered by and associated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (National Forests, National Grasslands, and National Recreation Areas and associated lands).

There is no no set deadline for all other trails, which follow Department of Interior process. These trails include those that are on private, city, county, or state land, or lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To find out more about National Recreation Trails and the nomination process, see: <http://tinyurl.com/nkp5rb>

NATIONAL TRAILS FUND APPLICATION OPENS NOVEMBER 1

Not many people know that in addition to fielding volunteer crews through its stewardship programs and advocating for hikers in the nation's capital, American Hiking Society also operates one of the largest privately funded trail-building grant programs in the United States. Since 1998, the National Trails Fund has awarded nearly \$600,000 to hiking clubs and organizations to help finance critical trail projects.

Thanks to National Trails Fund sponsor L.L.Bean, on November 1, American Hiking Society will begin accepting requests for grants valued up to \$5,000 for trail projects in 2015. If you're a member of a hiking club, land trust, friends group, or other organization that is planning a trail project, encourage them to sign up as a member of AHS' Alliance of Hiking Organizations, fill out the grant application, and your group could be eligible to receive a 2015 National Trails Fund grant. For more information, visit www.AmericanHiking.org/National-Trails-Fund/.

(From [American Hiking Society's e-newsletter](#))

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE LINKS

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

RECENT TRAILS-RELATED E-NEWSLETTERS

- Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (October): <http://tinyurl.com/o9xl7zb>
- American Trails (October): <http://tinyurl.com/kg5mcwf>
- Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter (October): <http://tinyurl.com/8y98hzt>

GRANTS:

- AT&T gives \$3,500 to hiking trails project in Kentucky: <http://tinyurl.com/ol4ehdt>

STUDIES:

- Trails, pickleball popular with Illinois fitness enthusiasts, survey says: <http://tinyurl.com/m3avh9u>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- American Planning Association's 2014 Great Public Spaces (two are trails-related): <http://tinyurl.com/md2fw6x>
- A walk in the park: Google Maps hits the trails in California: <http://tinyurl.com/lrtrbmh>
- 6 Great Seattle trail runs: <http://tinyurl.com/nddw7mc>
- 11 Scenic Bike Trails for Fabulous Fall Rides in North America: <http://tinyurl.com/k232tmc>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center names its 50th Walk Friendly Community: <http://tinyurl.com/nobl6ar>
- Walking Is The Superfood Of Fitness, Experts Say: <http://tinyurl.com/nkpxqp3>
- How Hiking Is Good for Body and Mind: <http://tinyurl.com/kxkvgu5>
- Help the US Department of Transportation identify projects of national and regional significance (survey closes Nov 17): <http://tinyurl.com/olfgaqa>
- Secret trails near Downtown LA require a smartphone to find them: <http://tinyurl.com/me63sop>

- The Walking Classroom (a great fit for trails): <http://tinyurl.com/pvbfo4c>
- Call for Presentations for International Trails Symposium in Portland, Oregon (deadline Jan 9): <http://tinyurl.com/n6tpbyr>
- Florida's Award-Winning State Parks and Trails Continue Record-Breaking Success: <http://tinyurl.com/mu8vdsm>
- Pennsylvania leads nation in rails-to-trails miles: <http://tinyurl.com/nm2ur6c>
- Trails Are Going High Tech. Are You Ready?: <http://tinyurl.com/ok88lct>
- App helps runners find new trails abroad and in their backyard: <http://tinyurl.com/n59a2qf>
- Barrett Brown Changed Single-Track Construction, Maintenance: <http://tinyurl.com/kyp7ff7>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- A Proposed Floating Cycleway on the Thames Is Hilarious—and Insulting: <http://tinyurl.com/po8ktzu>
- World's best urban jogging trails: <http://tinyurl.com/krgh3bs>
- Video of completed Seaside Greenway in Vancouver (Canada): <http://vimeo.com/106894206>
- Inca trail appointed UNESCO World Heritage status and a new Inca road to Machu Picchu discovered: <http://tinyurl.com/nn9jgp7>

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.