

# ACTION UPDATE

May 2014

## INTERIORWIDE

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### **PEOPLE ADVISED AGAINST DRIVING ON FORESTRY ROADS**

Due to saturated soils during spring break-up please do not drive on Fairbanks Area State Forest Roads from April 20 through May 20. These roads include: Cache Creek, Nenana Ridge, Rosie Creek, Skinnys, Bonanza, Standard Creek, Two Rivers, and Mosquito Creek.

If roads dry out more quickly, the dates will change to allow access prior to May 20. The silt-based roads are incredibly muddy and traffic on them in this condition creates ruts, which channel runoff and cause the road to washout, making it impassible altogether. If the roads are severely damaged by traffic and runoff it will take longer to make access possible, so please cooperate with any advisories that are posted.

If you would like information as to which roads this advisory impacts or updated information, please call Division of Forestry 907/451-2602.

*(From Alaska Outdoor Council email)*

### **SEMINAR TO EXPLORE RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND ACCESS ISSUES**

The local right-of-way association will hold a seminar on access issues in late May in Fairbanks.

“Access Law & Issues Affecting Public & Private Lands in Alaska” will be held May 30 from 8am to 5pm at the Westmark Hotel and Convention Center, 813 Cowles Street, Fairbanks Alaska.

Topics to be covered include RS 2477 Rights of Way, Public Land Order and Other Highway Rights of Way, Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act 17(b) Easements, Alaska Supreme Court Cases on Easements, and Public Prescriptive Easements.

The seminar, being sponsored by the International Right of Way Association, Chapter 71, Fairbanks, costs \$200 for members of the association and \$225 for non-members. The cost includes lunch. Registration deadline is Friday, May 16, 2014.

For more information and to register online see the website (<http://tinyurl.com/ktthkrk>) or contact seminar coordinator Cora Shook, (907/978-4087; [bearhug@gci.net](mailto:bearhug@gci.net)).

### **VALUE OF CHENA RIVER EXPLORED AT ANNUAL SUMMIT**

The second Annual Chena Summit will be held May 7 at the Carlson Center from 11am to 6pm with a free Educators Fair and Hot Topics presentation 4pm-6pm. The summit will feature a variety of sessions focusing on the value of the Chena River, with experts providing information related to Critters, Habitat, Recreation, and Economics of the Chena

River with stimulating conversations among the many community stakeholders. Please register at: <http://tinyurl.com/q6389pl>

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

## **WATCH FOR BIRD NESTS WHEN WORKING ON TRAILS**

Trail work sometimes requires downing trees or clearing shrubs. When doing so make sure not to violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which makes it illegal for anyone to “take” migratory birds, their eggs, feathers, or nests. “Take” includes destroying or damaging active bird nests or eggs. Different areas of the state have different sensitive periods generally occurring between April 15 and July 25. However, if you encounter an active nest *at any time* leave it in place and protected until young hatch and depart. “Active” is indicated by intact eggs, live chicks, or the presence of an adult on the nest.

For a PDF document with more information and recommended time periods for avoiding vegetation clearing see: <http://tinyurl.com/kwubruc>

## **SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE**

Please keep in mind how your trail activities might affect other trail users, especially in the spring.

As snow pack disappears, the ground thaws and the trails become extremely muddy. Using really muddy trails at this time can result in ruts that stay all summer when the trails dry out. Those ruts can make the trails difficult to use all summer and help create erosion by keeping water on the trails.

Early season damage of trails is a recurring problem. Many people are chomping at the bit to get outside once the snow melts. And some people love to get as muddy as they can while out on the trails. But with a little thought this problem can be greatly reduced.

- **Try to be patient.** Stay off the trails if you can. If you are unsure if a trail is ready to be used, check it out with the commitment to turn back if you are doing too much damage.
- **Choose low impact.** If you use the trails in several different ways, choose the method of travel that will cause the least amount of damage if you do run into some muddy sections.
- **Pick your trails carefully.** Use well-drained trails with lots of southern exposure. They typically dry out the quickest. If you just have to get muddy, please limit your activities to trails that are already thrashed. A little more damage probably won't make a big difference, but a trail in nice shape can be damaged for a season in a hurry.

If we all head out onto the trails with other users in mind, everyone will have a better trail experience.

(Here's a short video by a mountain bike group that gives another reason for staying off muddy trails: <http://tinyurl.com/mmxcq9y>)

## **SNOWMOBILE TRAILS APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE NOW**

Grant applications for the state Snowmobile Trails Program were available starting April 1. Public notice for grant applications must be posted by June 10. Grant applications must be submitted or postmarked by July 1.

This program, administered by the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use. The program also provides funds for snowmobile safety and educational programs.

Matching funds are not required for safety and educational grant programs. Grant funds are generated from annual registration fees paid to the State by snowmobile owners statewide. For more information on the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program and the Grooming Pool, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/q33aj9m>

For general grant questions regarding the program please contact the Grants Administrator (907/269-8709). For project development questions please contact the State Trails Coordinator (907/269-8699). Contact either one through the Department of Natural Resources email page (<http://tinyurl.com/3umsvj5>).

### **INTERIORWIDE LINKS**

- Couple completes White Mountains 100 on skis: <http://tinyurl.com/ktmem9e>
- Spring breakup means trail closures: <http://tinyurl.com/mhwatmu>
- Denali Park Road cleared to 92 Mile: <http://tinyurl.com/mbuyzd3>

## **FAIRBANKS AREA**

### **PATH CIRCLING UNIVERSITY TO BE STARTED THIS SUMMER**

A bike/pedestrian path circling the greater University of Alaska Fairbanks area is on its way to being started this summer.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly recently approved most of the project. However, the assembly told the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) to hold one additional meeting with property owners on controversial part of the project along Yankovich Road.

As planned, the path would start at the UAF roundabout and continue along Tanana Farm Road as a two-way paved pathway that is adjoined to the road on the north side. At Sheep Creek Road the path will become a completely separated pathway still on the north side, where a current unpaved path now exists. This section will not be paved because of the permafrost concerns in the area. It will be slightly higher and wider than the current path, which should help with water issues during spring thaw.

At Miller Hill Road, the new path will follow that road north along its east side to Yankovich Road. At Yankovich, the new path will follow that road east along its south side to the Large Animal Research Station (LARS). Both these path sections will be separated

from the road.

DOTPF plans to start and possibly complete this first phase (from the roundabout to LARS). UAF is donating property for the project.

As planned, the second phase of the project would switch to the north side of Yankovich Road after the LARS and run along that side to Ballaine Road. It would be paved and separated from the road. The path could not be built on the south side of Yankovich Road because “the houses on the south side of Yankovich are too close to the road and we would have to move garages if the path was placed there,” Carl Heim, DOTPF manager for the project, wrote in an email.

From the intersection of Yankovich and Ballaine, the path would follow Ballaine Road south (on its west side) until it connects to the existing bike/pedestrian path that runs along Farmer’s Loop Road.

However, the section along Yankovich Road’s north side is controversial. It would require right-of-way acquisition and removal of vegetation, including trees. Some people in the area oppose that part of the project because of the need for right-of-way acquisition. The Fairbanks Assembly, the final local planning authority, approved the project at its April 24 meeting on condition “that DOT hold one additional meeting with interested property owners along Yankovich Road; to reconsider options for the bike path along Yankovich Road from the Musk Ox Farm to Ballaine Road that would minimize or eliminate the need for taking of private property along this section of the project.”

Options other than a separated pathway for that section of the project are limited, according to Kellen Spillman, a borough planner.

“If the pathway is somehow hooked to the roadway it would essentially require rebuilding the entire roadway, and would most likely be cost prohibitive,” Spillman wrote in an email. However, he said DOTPF and the borough will meet with the landowners and look again at the project to see if the design can be modified to reduce the need for right-of-way acquisition.

Another option is to not build that portion of the project. Unfortunately, Yankovich Road has virtually no shoulder. Whatever the outcome, the construction date of the second phase is unknown since the project is slightly short on funding and the right-of-way would need to be acquired.

More information on the project (including maps) can be found in the assembly’s agenda packet from April 24 (<http://tinyurl.com/mkf8j59>). The packet is large (53MB) and includes everything from that meeting.

## **GROUP SEEKS EASEMENT ON ESTER DOME FOR EQUINOX TRAIL**

The state Department of Natural Resources is seeking comment on a trail easement application atop Ester Dome. Comment is due by 5pm, Friday, May 2.

The Interior Trails Preservation Coalition (ITPC) has applied for the easement as part of a plan to reroute the Equinox Marathon Trail on top of Ester Dome. Last year, a portion of the trail was closed to the Equinox Marathon by the owner of the land over which that section of trail runs. That portion looped around the towers atop Ester Dome and had been a part of the marathon since the race’s inception in 1963. The marathon had

to be rerouted onto Ester Dome Road. The landowner, the Alaska Ski Corporation, closed the trail after a race volunteer cleared alder bushes along that trail section.

The ITPC is trying to create a trail reroute that would again have runners go around the towers. The reroute would follow a section line north from Ester Dome Road across Alaska Ski Corporation Land to land owned by the state Department of Natural Resources. If the easement application is approved, it would allow a trail to be built from the section line across DNR land.

This easement application is part of a bigger plan by the ITPC to gain year-round public-use easements to the Equinox Marathon Trail atop Ester Dome. The Alaska Ski Corporation has allowed the Equinox Marathon to cross its land, but the corporation does not allow public use on the trail for the rest of the year.

For more information on the easement application see: <http://tinyurl.com/mwatxbq>

*(Newsletter editor Eric Troyer is a board member of the ITPC.)*

## **ESTER DOME SINGLETRACK CLOSED DURING BREAK UP**

The Ester Dome Singletrack trails will be closed during spring break up, as they are every year. They will open when they firm up.

When they open a notice will be sent out on the Fairbanks Cycle Club List Serve and posted on Goldstream Sports Facebook

Even the smallest of ruts on the trail will channel the water down the trail instead for letting it shed off the side as designed. Once the water starts running down the trail, the erosion will do a lot of damage. Please respect the quality of the trail we all enjoy so much.

Once break up is over and the trails firm up, they are ok to ride even when wet. The same is true of all trails. This time of year we are all excited to ride but can do much more damage than it looks like due to the power of flowing water.

Thank you for your trail respect. Check with Joel at Goldstream Sports for more info: 455-6520.

*(From Fairbanks Cycle Club list serve message)*

## **MEETING TO ADDRESS STATE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

An open house meeting will be held in Fairbanks for input on the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The meeting will be on May 7 at the Noel Wien Library, 1215 Cowles St. It will run from 4:30 to 8 PM with a brief presentation at 5:30

The LRTP is an important planning tool for the state, for our communities, and for all modes of transportation. The plan, which looks at near term and future transportation needs, aligns with the state's policy direction; identifies future transportation challenges and opportunities; balances how best to develop the transportation system while preserving the current system; and ensures safe, reliable transportation for all Alaskans. You can help shape the process! What are the most important transportation issues facing our state? What needs improvement now and in the future? For more information or to sign up for the LRTP mailing list, go to [www.dot.alaska.gov/lrtpplanupdate](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/lrtpplanupdate).

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

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## CHENA HOT SPRINGS ROAD

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### **TRAIL RESTRICTIONS SET FOR CHENA RIVER STATE REC AREA**

Between Sunday, April 20 and May 22, multi-use trails in the Chena River State Recreation Area will be closed to all but pedestrian use. The purpose of these closures is to protect trails during spring break-up so that all users can continue to enjoy them.

The Compeau, Stiles Creek, and Angel Creek Hillside Trails, which are accessed from Mile 26 to Mile 50.5 of the Chena Hot Springs Road, will be closed to protect natural resources, decrease maintenance costs, and reduce trail degradation. This closure will remain in effect until May 22 unless repealed sooner by Director's Order. The South Fork and Angel Creek Valley Trails are winter-use-only trails. They will close on April 20 and reopen to winter traffic on Oct. 15.

State Parks is always reluctant to restrict the use of park lands and only does so if there are no other viable management alternatives. The regulatory basis for these closures is 11 AAC 12.335 and 11AAC20.990 (21).

*(From Alaska State Parks notice)*

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## STATEWIDE

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### **ALASKANS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL TRAILS DAY IN JUNE**

Several events will be held across Alaska in celebration of National Trails Day. Most will be held on Saturday, June 7, but others will be held on other days. For information on specific events see the Southcentral and Interior regional news sections.

National Trails Day is the American Hiking Society's signature trail awareness program. It inspires the public and trail enthusiasts nationwide to seek out their favorite trails to discover, learn about, and celebrate trails while participating in educational exhibits, trail dedications, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail work projects.

For more info see: <http://www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>

### **ALASKA OHV TRAIL MANAGEMENT BOOK AVAILABLE**

An excellent book on management of trails for off-highway vehicles (OHV) is available in hard copy.

"Sustainable Off-Highway Vehicle Trails-An Alaska Trail Manager's Perspective" was written by Kevin Meyer, a now-retired National Park Service (NPS) soils scientist and trails specialist. Meyer was also an active (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) partner. Kevin just used the book at the Alaska Statewide Trails Conference, hosting a two-day training on *Fundamentals of OHV Trail Management*. If you want a framework for dealing with OHV/ATV trail management, this book is a fabulous resource. Kevin spent nearly 15 years working with RTCA in Alaska, designing OHV/ATV Trail solutions for over 35 sites statewide and developing this framework to manage OHV/ATVs.

The book is published by the USDA Forest Service, Technology and Development Program, 2300-Recreation Revised, November 2013, 1123-2804P-MTDC. An electronic copy is not ready at this time, but will be soon. So you can keep an eye on the Missoula Technology and Development Center website (<http://tinyurl.com/mcjm4p>) if you want the book electronically. But if you want a hard copy, send us an email with your name and address to Lisa Holzapfel ([lisa\\_holzapfel@nps.gov](mailto:lisa_holzapfel@nps.gov)) and she'll mail one to you.

*(From Lisa Holzapfel)*

## **GROUP OFFERS SUMMER TRAIL WORK FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

The Alaska Youth Service Corps (AYSC) is recruiting summer crew members, ages 17-20, to work from June to August. Crew members will be trained and deployed to conduct on-the-ground environmental stewardship activities on public lands in southeast and southcentral Alaska. Working and living together as a team, AYSC crews will use hand tools to improve recreational trails, reduce and control erosion on streams and rivers, remove invasive weeds from natural areas, and remove vegetation along Alaskan highways for wildlife safety.

For more information contact SAGA (phone: 907-789-6172; email: [admin@servealaska.org](mailto:admin@servealaska.org); website: [www.servealaska.org/](http://www.servealaska.org/))

## **COMMENT SOUGHT ON TRANSPORTATION PLAN AMENDMENT**

The deadline is May 8 for comments on Amendment 9 to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Amendment 9 addresses scope, funding and scheduling issues on various projects around the state. To comment and to see the projects proposed in Amendment 9, go to (<http://tinyurl.com/l9svqpm>). The amendment includes Parks Highway/Talkeetna Spur Road Pedestrian Improvements.

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

## **STATEWIDE LINKS**

- 1,400-mile snowmobile trek follows Iditarod Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/pnztga3>
- Getting Ready for Paddling Season (Outdoors Explorer radio show): <http://tinyurl.com/lkgbw9f>
- Wildlife Hazards in Context (Outdoor Explorer radio show): <http://tinyurl.com/l99kyzk>
- Experimental road wicking fabric (might be useful for trails): <http://tinyurl.com/q2u9rty>
- Walk/Bike to School Day is May 7: <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org>
- Planning Summer Trips With Kids (Outdoor Explorer radio show): <http://tinyurl.com/lberp4s>
- No two people are outdoorsy in the same way: <http://tinyurl.com/lf3cvhv>
- Earth Day Brings Spring Cleaning to Anchorage Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/ka4ggxx>
- Deadline is June 1 for the Alaska Community Foundation's "Strengthening Organizations" grants: <http://tinyurl.com/mv2bnzn>
- Juneau elementary students clean up trail for Earth Day: <http://tinyurl.com/l6uzgu9>

- For some Northwest Arctic students, Kobuk 440 trail becomes a classroom: <http://tinyurl.com/k8ntadr>
- Snakes in Southcentral Alaska? Only pets, say biologists: <http://tinyurl.com/l8682js>
- You can survive -- and enjoy -- shoulder season: <http://tinyurl.com/nxn8dyo>
- Hiker Heaven; A sample guide of Alaskan hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/kljvnrl>
- Grant workshop to be held in Anchorage, May 7-8: <http://tinyurl.com/nnzs9hc>
- Fixing Chugach Park's dangerous Mount Baldy Trail would be money well spent: <http://tinyurl.com/mr74llm>
- The Alaska Outdoorsman: Middle Fork Loop Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/lqwfy2>
- 5 Hikes around Anchorage that aren't Flat Top: <http://tinyurl.com/lzm7ohl>
- Manitoba Cabin a family-friendly place on near side of backcountry: <http://tinyurl.com/kuw9xfz>
- Committee giving trail behind Kenai school a facelift: <http://tinyurl.com/mmydtjz>
- Homer Earth Day event includes trail, poems dedication: <http://tinyurl.com/n8vcstv>
- Kodiak's Island Trails Network newsletters: <http://tinyurl.com/ms6l2a9>; <http://tinyurl.com/krl dj6o>

#### STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- State Parks' *Eagle Watch* (April, 56.1MB): <http://tinyurl.com/qxdcshg>

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## NATIONWIDE

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### ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES FULL LWCF FUNDING

With the release of the Obama administration's budget in March, hikers, anglers, conservationists, hunters, and Americans who simply enjoy the outdoors are celebrating the president's intent to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the first time in many years.

Funding for this program is derived primarily from revenues from offshore drilling with the intent to use the funds to protect lands and waters that Americans use for recreation. This includes building sustainable trails. Yet, most years Congress diverts much of these funds to other uses. We salute the President's proposal to fully fund this important program.

For more information on the program see the following links:

- Homepage: <http://lwcfcoalition.org>
- State LWCF: <http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/>
- Wikipedia page: <http://tinyurl.com/mho3wo2>

*(From the American Hiking Society's Paperless Trail e-newsletter, April edition)*

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## 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](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)
- 2015 International Trails Symposium will be held in Portland, OR: <http://tinyurl.com/mddqdx>

### *RECENT TRAILS-RELATED E-NEWSLETTERS*

- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (April): <http://tinyurl.com/orsknao>
- American Trails (April): <http://tinyurl.com/kvvmfml>

### *GRANTS:*

- IMBA Small Grants Program deadline is May 30: <http://tinyurl.com/qxg6eq4>

### *STUDIES:*

- Price tag for childhood obesity: \$19,000 per kid: <http://tinyurl.com/kajjsyr>
- Study Reveals More Children Are Walking to School: <http://tinyurl.com/kstwx6f>
- Dirt exposure 'boosts happiness': <http://tinyurl.com/ysp6z6>
- The Health Benefits of Walking: <http://tinyurl.com/lpu4ajl>
- 2014 U.S. Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth: <http://tinyurl.com/ke9zfh5>

### *OTHER LINKS:*

- Pure Michigan: On the way to becoming a trails state: <http://tinyurl.com/k2obk87>
- Trail etiquette tips (from Colorado but good for anywhere): <http://tinyurl.com/qjzpv7u>
- Are Asphalt Pumptracks the Future?: <http://tinyurl.com/l4fm8d9>
- US Secretary of Transportation encourages citizens to share transportation stories (which can include trails): <http://tinyurl.com/m96tnel>
- Firm trail surface product; acts like pavement, made of wood: <http://tinyurl.com/ntz4m2x>
- Veteran building trails to recovery: <http://tinyurl.com/lalzhya>
- A legal interpretation of the recent Supreme Court Rails-to-Trails ruling: <http://tinyurl.com/kgja8qv>
- 2014 Outstanding Trails for 4WDs named: <http://tinyurl.com/m4xks9f>
- Smartphone app provides Iowa by trail: <http://tinyurl.com/n8rlrwo>
- 20 top trails across the USA: <http://tinyurl.com/mmww2tn>
- Top 9 Hiking Trails in the U.S.: <http://tinyurl.com/lfqhuxl>
- IMBA Model Trail Nominations are Due by May 16: <http://tinyurl.com/m4sxd7o>
- 'Sharing Trails Day' held in Lewiston, Montana: <http://tinyurl.com/l3nmysx>
- 50 Northwest Mountain Bike Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/mk6fjc4>
- Transportation Planning for Healthy Communities: <http://tinyurl.com/mjqazhz>

- Jury finds Haleakala Trail is public land: <http://tinyurl.com/mz9paex>
  - The Top Mountain Bike Trails in the USA, State by State: <http://tinyurl.com/k5st475>
  - The Pleasures of Long Distance Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/kbbn23s>
  - Coalition Maps Out Strategies for RTP reauthorization: <http://tinyurl.com/n23qmd9>
  - The world's greatest walking trails: <http://tinyurl.com/n4ho79e>
  - Best 10 walking trails of Korea: <http://tinyurl.com/l9q2x8w>
  - Abu Dhabi to double walkways and bike trails by 2020: <http://tinyurl.com/mlapraf>
  - Trails 'clear and away the number one' recreation asset, says Canadian consultant: <http://tinyurl.com/mlvme7d>
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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](mailto: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.