

**ALASKA
TRAILS**



www.alaska-trails.org

ACTION UPDATE

February 2014

Action Updates are produced about once a month between issues of the quarterly Alaska Trails newsletter. Action Updates include new action items, action items previously reported with a deadline not yet passed, and other breaking news of interest to trail users. A copy of this Action Update will be posted to our web site.

STATEWIDE NEWS

KEEP TRAILS IN THE MINDS OF OUR LEGISLATORS

The Alaska Legislature has will soon start its session. Don't forget to keep trails issues in the minds of our legislators. They have many other things vying for their attention. If they don't hear from trail advocates they may think that trails are not important to Alaskans. Contact information for senators and representatives can be found at: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/>

GROUP OFFERS TRAIL WORK SPRING BREAK VACATIONS

Are you a college student looking to make a difference over your spring break? American Hiking Society's Alternative Breaks are volunteer trail stewardship projects in America's parks and forests and provide college student groups the opportunity to connect with nature, meet people, and have a truly memorable vacation.

Make new friends and share laughter over a campfire. Experience an amazing sense of accomplishment after building a bridge or restoring a neglected trail. Connect with the land. Experience nature first-hand. Spend your break doing something that makes a lasting difference.

General information about the Alternative Break program can be found here (<http://tinyurl.com/9s8kkq6>).
(From the American Hiking Society)

DETAILS FOR 2014 STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE COMING

The Alaska Trails Statewide Trail Conference will be held April 24-26 at Alaska Pacific University (APU) in Anchorage. Registration information and agenda will be available on the Alaska Trails website (www.alaska-trails.org) on or before February 10.

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

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

If you use "Pick. Click. Give" you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it's you making the gift. Since we will not see who contributes until this fall, you can also email Alaska Trails President Geoffrey Orth (geoffrey.orth@alaska-trails.org) and we will keep you informed of our projects in your community.

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

TRAINING ON ANILCA OFFERED BY INSTITUTE OF THE NORTH

The Institute of the North is hosting its two-day ANILCA training March 5-6, 2014 at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage, Alaska. This training will provide a thorough review of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) and provide an opportunity to examine and discuss current and controversial ANILCA-related issues with several subject matter experts.

The training curriculum features a comprehensive review of the ANILCA statute in an easy-to-use format that includes a storehouse of resource materials that relate to this Act. These materials include the Act, ANILCA amendments, other relevant public land laws, CFR regulations that affect the Conservation System Units in Alaska, as well as pertinent documents, background information, and video materials of Sen. Ted Stevens and others involved in ANILCA at, and since, its enactment.

Register online for the course at: www.institutenorth.org/calendar/events/nilca-training

For questions or more information, contact Karlin Itchoak at: [907/786-6331](tel:9077866331) or kitchoak@institutenorth.org.
(From Karlin Itchoak)

GOVERNOR FUNDS RTP ADMINISTRATION, BUT MORE LOBBYING NEEDED

Gov. Sean Parnell has included administration funding of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in his budget, but the budget still needs to be approved by the legislature. Trail advocates need to tell their legislators to keep that item in the budget. Also please thank Gov. Parnell.

The RTP is the biggest trail funding source for Alaska, providing about \$1.5 million toward trails each year. Administration of the program costs about \$200,000 a year. This goes toward paying for a grant administrator, a program coordinator, an accounting technician, and a part-time GIS specialist. 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.

When writing or talking to your legislators 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 budget item can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/n336s9c>

The capital budget also has other items of importance to trail advocates, including the Snowmobile Trail Development and Grants (paid for through snowmobile registration fees) and deferred maintenance for the various state park regions, which will include some trail work. See all the capital budget details here: <http://tinyurl.com/nxcbkku>

Get contact information for your legislators here: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/index.php>

To thank the governor 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>).

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Alaskans offer tips on surviving below-zero temps: <http://tinyurl.com/oedkkaf>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Winter Camping and Snowshoeing: <http://tinyurl.com/kep879p>
- Fish and Game teaches residents how to release pets from traps: <http://tinyurl.com/kdy3crw>

STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Alaska State Parks' Eagle Watch (January 2014; 3.8MB): <http://tinyurl.com/qxdcshg>

SOUTHCENTRAL REGION NEWS AND NOTICES

NEW MEMBERS SOUGHT FOR SNOWMOBILE TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is inviting people to apply to the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC). Applications are due by 5pm Friday, February 14.

The 11-member board has three vacancies. One position represents the Kenai Peninsula, Valdez and Prince William Sound. The other two represent the Anchorage area. The term for these positions will begin March 1, 2014 and expire February 28, 2017.

To be considered for an appointment, please submit a letter of interest that describes your professional background and snowmobile interests, experience, and knowledge, a current resume and three professional references to Darcy Harris, the State Trails Program Coordinator, via email at darcy.harris@alaska.gov or standard mail at 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1380, Anchorage, AK 99501. (Fax: 907-269-8907.)

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. The division is seeking individuals with special knowledge, experience, and interest in snowmobile use and in grant-funded programs. Council members serve a three-year term participating in meetings or teleconferences at a minimum of once a year or as necessary.

For additional information regarding SnowTRAC or the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program, please see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm>.

(From DPOC news release)

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Compass: Our beloved Chugach trails need some work: <http://tinyurl.com/nehdvuk>
- Feb. 15 is Winter Family Fun Day at Reflections Lake in the Mat-Su Valley: <http://tinyurl.com/kfua2zd>
- On Anchorage's beloved trails, a little courtesy goes a long way: <http://tinyurl.com/kd4avzc>
- What's on your list of must-do Alaska races? (Most are trail runs): <http://tinyurl.com/lpcdhqq>
- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/o9aq7nh>
- Final draft of the Soldotna Recreation and Trails Master Plan: <http://tinyurl.com/nxmnvx9>
- 'Fat bike' enterprises gain traction in Anchorage: <http://tinyurl.com/orwhl3o>

INTERIOR REGION NEWS AND NOTICES

INTERIOR LINKS

- Delta Junction Trails Association has a new website: <http://tinyurl.com/mndwsly>
- Ski shop owner keeps it simple: <http://tinyurl.com/ktvl28t>
- In Alaska's wilds, the mystic hiker's bus draws pilgrims to danger and death: <http://tinyurl.com/pspxmzm>

SOUTHEAST REGION NEWS AND NOTICES

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- On the Trails: Short winter junkets: <http://tinyurl.com/lfa9vge>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

\$100,000 IN TRAIL BUILDING GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM BELL HELMETS

Bell Bike Helmets and IMBA are once again offering up \$100,000 for three trail projects in the U.S. Twelve regional finalists will be announced on March 5, with the three winning projects chosen by public vote. Winners will receive a trail assistance grant from Bell, which will fund the final design and construction by IMBA Trail Solutions. Deadline to apply is Feb. 28. More info at: <http://www.imba.com/grants/bell-built>

SUSTAINABLE TRAILS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN WEST VIRGINIA

Registration is now open for the 2014 Sustainable Trails Conference. It will be March 30 through April 5 at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park in West Virginia. Early registration closes March 14. Keynote address by Robert H. Plymale, director and CEO of Rahall Transportation Institute. For more information see:

<http://tinyurl.com/mnuxu5u>

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

- American Trails (January 2014): <http://tinyurl.com/khnbroz>
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (January 2014): <http://tinyurl.com/mfmqe63>

STUDIES:

- Study finds that mental benefits of greenery are immediate, long-lasting: <http://tinyurl.com/m6lvbe3>

OTHER LINKS:

- Federal 'Blueway' program axed amid backlash: <http://tinyurl.com/npaa6xa>
- Dallas trail systems vital to health, property values: <http://tinyurl.com/lw3e5ub>
- Turf-surfing on a trail run: <http://tinyurl.com/ooow723>
- What is Good Fat-Bike Trail Grooming?: <http://tinyurl.com/kxgtbck>
- How To Build A Fatbike Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/lqtdlbi>
- Should cameras be installed on popular hiking trails?: <http://tinyurl.com/jvrjvfu>
- Why California's Trails Are Disappearing From Our Maps: <http://tinyurl.com/l863hh4>

- Trails abound on the North, South Carolina border: <http://tinyurl.com/kcy9rgn>
 - Learning trails to help prepare children for school: <http://tinyurl.com/m5rntek>
 - Oregon Desert Trail maps, waypoints to be announced online: <http://tinyurl.com/mt5dg7g>
 - QR codes help Phoenix hikers navigate trails: <http://tinyurl.com/kzk32kp>
 - Cycle trails making positive impact on the New Zealand economy: <http://tinyurl.com/kbxe27m>
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The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference on the second Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00PM. 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. Full newsletters come out at the beginning of March, June, September, and December. Action Updates come out most months in between. Deadline for articles is five days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org

Enjoy your trail activities safely and be an Alaskan trail steward!