

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM EFFORTS MOVING FORWARD

Alaska Trails' efforts to start an Adopt-A-Trail program are bearing fruit. The goal of the program is to address the maintenance shortfall on public lands by linking public land managers with trained volunteers. By building skills in core groups of volunteers who will return each year, Alaska Trails will help to train and retain people who will directly address the maintenance backlog.

In November of 2014, Alaska Trails convened a stakeholder meeting with city, borough, state and federal land managers in attendance, as well as non-profit and business partners. Alaska Trails has since built on the ideas generated at that meeting to submit three grant proposals, to present at the 2015 Statewide Trails conference, and to schedule a volunteer training with several partners in Girdwood for September of 2015.

Alaska Trails has received a grant from the Alaska Conservation Foundation for the Adopt-A-Trail project. In addition, the Alaska Community Foundation granted money for the organizational development of the project. Alaska Trails is currently seeking assistance for program from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. Governmental agencies and organizations that attended the initial stakeholder meeting include: US Forest Service, National Park Service, BLM, Alaska State Parks, Mat-Su Borough, Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Anchorage Park Foundation, the Student Conservation Association and REI.

### USE YOUR PERMANENT FUND TO HELP ALASKA TRAILS

Thanks to all those who have donated to Alaska Trails through Pick Click Give. There's still time to donate through your PFD. Donations can be added until August 31.

Don't miss this opportunity to help Alaska Trails build and maintain the trails you enjoy all across Alaska. Your support is critical to our work and we sincerely appreciate your support. Add a donation at: <http://www.pfd.alaska.gov/> (Look for the green button on the lower right).

### 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 have a bunch of trail tools including mcleods, pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much more. If you would like to borrow one, please contact us (info on masthead).

### TENTATIVE TRACS TRAINING SCHEDULED IN OCTOBER FOR ANCHORAGE

Though it's not finalized, please mark your calendars for a Trail Fundamentals and TRACS (Trail Assessment and Condition Surveys) training for Tuesday, October 6, – Thursday, October 8, in Anchorage. We hope to have it all ironed out soon and will get you the details as soon as we have them.

Please call Alaska Trails with any questions or for more information at [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049).

*Check us out on Facebook:*

[www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alaska-Trails/707066126002590)

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD TO OPEN

Applications for the Recreational Trails Grant Program will be available starting August 15.

The Recreational Trail Grant Program provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities. The program also provides funds for safety and educational programs. To learn more about the program, please visit the Recreational Trails Program page at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

### STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- *Eagle Watch*, Alaska State Parks (June): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/> (> Newsroom)
- *Frontiers*, BLM (Summer): <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/frontiers.html>

### STATEWIDE LINKS

- America's 32 Best Trails (includes two Alaska trails): <http://tinyurl.com/ovrdzpn>
- Comments due August 27 on Alaska's 2016-19 Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program: <http://tinyurl.com/nts4d5r>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Arctic Paddling Trips: <http://tinyurl.com/ohhobzz>
- Taking Alaska tweens hiking without boring them to death: <http://tinyurl.com/qb3fyzn>

### SOUTHWEST LINKS

- Rep. Edgmon wants answers on changes at state park: <http://tinyurl.com/p9c35kn>

### SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Southeast Businesses Make A Plea to Restore Tongass Rec. Funding: <http://tinyurl.com/pjdjogd>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### LEARN HOW TO USE INTERACTIVE MATANUSKA GREENBELT MAPS

"Fun with Matanuska Greenbelt maps" will be held Thursday, August 6, 4:30-5pm in the Mess Hall (Distance Delivery room) of the Matanuska Experiment Farm in Palmer. The farm is at 1509 S. Georgeson Drive.

The low-key session will demonstrate simple maps to just get around on the trails as well as more complex ones for emergency planning. It will also show participants how to make maps for special purposes, such as race maps, pathways to work days, and nature trails. Besides using a web browser for interactive maps, people can use some ESRI apps on smart devices. So come on out for some fun with the maps.

The session will start indoors, but then participants can take a short hike on some of the Farm trails to try things out. It is being held in conjunction with Alaska Agriculture Appreciation Day (<http://tinyurl.com/qyghung>).

*(From Dot Helm)*

### MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR GRANTS

The Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation announces the start of its fall grant cycle. Letters of Intent (very brief "pitches" about your project) are due August 7. Projects in the Mat-Su Borough may be eligible for up to \$10,000. Funding will be awarded in time for applicants to approach the state Recreational Trails Program

(<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>) for additional support. For more information (and the Letter of Intent form) can be found at <http://www.matsutrails.org/grants>

*(From Kim Ryals, Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation)*

## SITE OFFERS BIKING TRAIL INFO FOR THE EASTERN KENAI PENINSULA

The Kenai Peninsula has a new online trails resource. Biking in the KMTA Corridor features paved and dirt biking trails in the eastern Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm area. All trails are shown in a navigable, color-coded Google Map. Brief trail descriptions inform your decision of where you can explore next. See the map at:

<http://www.kmtacorridor.org/management-plan/biking-in-the-kmta-corridor/>

*(From Lia Slemons)*

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Trail improvements planned for Pinochle Creek Trail near Glacier View: <http://tinyurl.com/qbmzev7>
- Mat-Su will get its first lighted ski trails at Government Peak: <http://tinyurl.com/ppjp3gg>
- Government Peak Singletrack Update (Mat-Su Valley): <http://tinyurl.com/qdmp83x>
- Facebook discussion continues on Mat-Su's Crevasse-Moraine Trail System: <http://tinyurl.com/qefw4pd>
- Government Peak (Mat-Su) Singletrack Update: [www.vmbah.org/government-peak-singletrack-update/](http://www.vmbah.org/government-peak-singletrack-update/)
- Teens spend summer vacation sprucing up local parks: <http://tinyurl.com/q2jpocz>
- Program Provides Teens With Meaningful Summer Job: <http://tinyurl.com/osm73lo>
- Anchorage Trails Initiative: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/>
- How Anchorage's Lael Wilcox Crushed the Tour Divide: <http://tinyurl.com/nz5fct>
- Mountain Man: Richard Baranow conquers all 166 Western Chugach peaks: <http://tinyurl.com/o4j9wre>
- Anchorage's Todd Family: Redefining the Great American Road Trip: <http://tinyurl.com/ov4p643>
- Half-mile jaunt at Anchorage's Earthquake Park reminds visitors of 1964 shaker: <http://tinyurl.com/q8br9d3>
- North Face Trail hike (Alyeska): Treats at the top: <http://tinyurl.com/q7bx786>
- Amazing views of glacier make new Spencer Bench cabin popular: <http://tinyurl.com/nmpqp62>
- Updates on the Kachemak Bay Water Trail on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/KachemakBayWaterTrail](http://www.facebook.com/KachemakBayWaterTrail)
- Popular Caines Head Trail in Seward gets a face-lift: <http://tinyurl.com/qzhmr6d>
- New group looks to add more and better trails in the Valdez area: <http://www.levitation49.org/projects/>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### FAIRBANKS ASSEMBLY HALTS TRAIL GROOMING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Citing liability issues, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly stopped a program that helped local trail-user groups groom trails in winter.

Under the program, in place since the 1990s, the borough Parks and Recreation Department supplied five local clubs with snowmachines to use in grooming trails for skiing and dog mushing. The borough loaned the machines to the clubs at the beginning of each winter. At the end of the winter season, the borough took the machines back and maintained them. After 10 years, the borough purchased new machines.

However, a volunteer groomer recently crashed one of the snowmachines, wrecking it, according to the borough. If the groomer had been hurt, the borough might have been liable as owner of the machine, according to the borough attorney. The borough administration recommended ending the program and the assembly agreed. The borough will donate the current machines to the groups.

The groups responded differently to the change. Bruce Jamieson, president of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, told the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner that the end of the program wouldn't be a major blow to the club.

“We maintain about half a million dollars in total grooming equipment,” Jamieson said. “I don’t see it as affecting us.”

However, Casey Thompson, vice president of Alaska Dog Musers Association (ADMA), told the News-Miner his club would have a hard time dealing with the change.

“It gets a little time-consuming and it is going to cost us a lot of money as a club to keep replacing that machine. How do we swallow that replacement cost?” he said.

Tom McGrane, a former ADMA groomer, sent a letter to the assembly asking the members to defeat or postpone action on stopping the program.

“By providing and maintaining quality machines, FNSB has been facilitating the grooming by volunteers of hundreds of miles of ski, mushing, skijoring, fat bike and walking trails, helping make Fairbanks a world class winter recreation area for both residents and visitors,” McGrane wrote. “Don’t let a lawyer’s preoccupation with liability prevent this cooperation with minimal reduction in actual liability. (How many claims have been made over the decades?)”

Below are links to two stories and one editorial from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner about the issue:

- Borough considers change to (trail grooming) vehicle loaning: <http://tinyurl.com/q7dlv5q>
- Borough donation of grooming equipment generous, liability too great: <http://tinyurl.com/o46lvud>
- Borough gifts snowmachines to local clubs, but withdraws all other support: <http://tinyurl.com/oxaj7pc>

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Chena Dome Trail (video): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xwbekk6Prw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xwbekk6Prw)
- Packrafting in the White Mountains with an aging adventure dog: <http://tinyurl.com/o238yyq>
- Discussion of the UAF and Skarland trail system on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/qbvkotp>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### SENATE KEEPS TRAILS PROGRAM IN MULTI-YEAR TRANSPORTATION BILL

The co-chairs of the Coalition for Recreational Trails, Marianne Wesley Fowler and Derrick A. Crandall, sent the following letter to its members on July 30.

*Dear Members of the CRT and CRT Council of Advisors: We are delighted to tell you that the U.S. Senate has just passed its multi-year transportation bill with a 65-34 vote. **The provisions affecting the Recreational Trails Program were left alone.** The amendments from Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) that would have eliminated RTP – which we asked you to help stop – were not brought up for consideration.*

*While it’s difficult to track exactly, we have heard that volumes of calls opposing Sen. Lee’s amendments were received by Senate offices. Thank you so much for your tremendous help!*

*Moving forward, the Senate has also just passed (91-4) the three-month extension of the current transportation legislation that the House had already passed. October 31, 2015 is now the new deadline for the House to pass its own multi-year transportation bill (or something else!). We’ll be sure to let you know if other challenges to the RTP surface as the action moves to the House of Representatives.*

*Thanks again for all the great help.*

### CDC RELEASES NEW BUILT ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

It is often difficult for local program staff and evaluators to know which features of the built environment are most important to measure to determine their impact on health behaviors and outcomes, and which tool(s) most accurately and feasibly assess those features. The Built Environment Assessment Tool (BE Tool):

<http://1.usa.gov/1JQoX4T>), an adaptation of MAPS, assesses a core set of features including built environment infrastructure (e.g., road type, curb cuts/ramps, intersections/crosswalks, traffic control, transportation), walkability (e.g. sidewalk/path features, walking safety, aesthetics & amenities), bikeability (e.g., bicycle lane/path features), recreational sites and structures, and the food environment (e.g., access to grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers markets, etc.). The BE Tool also describes the training of data collectors, provides instructions for selecting and assessing street segments, and offers guidance on managing and analyzing data.

The built environment includes buildings, roads, sidewalks, utilities, homes, transit, fixtures, parks and all other man-made entities that form the physical characteristics of a community. These can impact human health by affecting rates of physical activity, air pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter that can exacerbate asthma and respiratory disease, and emissions of carbon dioxide that contributes to climate change.

*(From Centerlines, the newsletter for the National Center for Biking and Walking)*

## NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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

### ADVOCACY

- 5 things you need to know about the public land heist: <http://tinyurl.com/q5aatop>

### STUDIES AND REPORTS

- Walking and Walkability: Approaches to increase physical activity, improve health: <http://tinyurl.com/njhyq92>
- Walking in nature can prevent depression: <http://tinyurl.com/p6k2bdk>
- Designed To Move, Active Cities: Guide for City Leaders (includes trails) (7.7MB): <http://tinyurl.com/ngw27a4>
- Hiking Trails in America: Pathways to Prosperity (6.7MB): <http://tinyurl.com/nz7owm3>
- Study links low-cost, free rec facilities near work sites with active commuting: <http://tinyurl.com/p39o8za>
- Report details use, economic impact of Columbus (Ohio) trails: <http://tinyurl.com/pfl35ee>
- 50 years of the Land and Water Conservation Fund: <http://tinyurl.com/ptamj2m>
- How Exercise Affects the Brain and Improves Memory: <http://tinyurl.com/pzmg24a>

### GRANTS

- Small Grant Winners Will Receive \$11,600 in Cash From IMBA: <http://tinyurl.com/qysuqe4>

### RECENT TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS/MAGAZINES

- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/ot7xpdv>
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (July): <http://tinyurl.com/qgexnyh>
- American Trails (July): <http://tinyurl.com/pxdev86>
- FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter (July): [www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/)

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Colorado Fourteeners Initiative targets creating sustainable trails: <http://tinyurl.com/qez3xzz>
- Florida spends \$25 million to create more nature trails: <http://tinyurl.com/oms3ffm>
- Share the Trail. Be nice. Trails are for everyone: [www.railstotrails.org/share-the-trail/](http://www.railstotrails.org/share-the-trail/)
- Inaugural issue of new Rails-to-Trails Conservancy magazine, *Trail Traveler*: <http://tinyurl.com/nlwuuk5>
- A celebration of conservation - Reinventing the BLM: <http://tinyurl.com/of2sgmm>
- Effort to put billboards on Florida trails ends with no takers: <http://tinyurl.com/qat7f55>

- Hawaii island trails: Easy to moderate hikes: <http://tinyurl.com/of7qm8r>
- 5 New American Rail-Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/pwndtrc>

#### *INTERNATIONAL LINKS*

- Canada's hidden mountain biking gem (Newfoundland, Canada): <http://tinyurl.com/nzc2kca>
- Popular trekking trails around Mount Annapurna deemed safe: <http://tinyurl.com/npf39k2>
- 6 Spectacular slackpacking trails in South Africa: <http://tinyurl.com/p9egabc>
- World Trails Network launches "World of Trails" Online Magazine: <http://tinyurl.com/p6xwqhn>

#### *SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL*

- Monkii Bars Bodyweight Training System Review: <http://tinyurl.com/ogzxlwz>

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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 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](mailto:eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org)