

# INTERIOR TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

December 2019

## INTERIORWIDE

### FAIRBANKS BOROUGH ASSEMBLY TO ADDRESS TRAIL-RELATED ITEMS

**ADVOCATE** The Fairbanks Borough Assembly has at least two trails-related items on the agenda for its **December 12 meeting**. Trail advocates who feel strongly about these issues should take action by taking one of the actions below:

- Attend the meeting and testify in support (meeting starts at 6pm on Nov 14 at 907 Terminal St.)
- Call or email one or more of the assembly members letting them know of your support:  
<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/assembly/Pages/Assembly-Members.aspx>

The items on the agenda are:

- **ORDINANCE NO. 2019 - 47:** To exempt from borough property taxes the Musher's Hall and trailhead for the Jeff Studdert Trails trailhead and parking. The Alaska Dog Musher's Association owns the property. The less the ADMA has to spend on taxes, the more it can spend on the its extensive trail system, which is free and open to the public. (See the ordinance here:  
<http://fnsb.us/assembly/OrdinanceResolutions/2019-47.pdf>).
  - The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner wrote a cautionary editorial regarding the Musher's Hall exemption: <https://tinyurl.com/s24l5wq>
- **ORDINANCE NO. 2019 - 20 - 1N:** To spend \$38,161 as match for a \$367,480 in federal highway funding to improve access roads to Birch Hill Recreation Area and South Davis Park access roads. Birch Hill has an extensive trail system and the South Davis access road leads to the Fairbanks Dog Park, which has several trails. Both are free and open to the public. (See the ordinance here:  
<http://fnsb.us/assembly/OrdinanceResolutions/2019-20-1N.pdf>).



#### PREVIOUS TRAILS-RELATED ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

At its November 14 meeting, the assembly passed a resolution to spend \$8,300 to match a \$83,000 grant for multiple trailhead kiosks that will provide trail access information for multi-use trails within the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area and beyond the rec area, including the Bonnefield Trail, Tanana River, and Tanana Flats areas.

#### LINKS TO INTERIOR TRAIL INFORMATION

A lot of information about trails in interior Alaska exists, but it's often hard to find. Here is a collection of trail-related resources: <https://www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/>. (If you find any broken links or other problems please send an email to [fbxtrails@gmail.com](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com))

(See the resolution here: <http://fnsb.us/assembly/OrdinanceResolutions/R2019-41.pdf>, and see the Trails Advisory Commission packet below, starting at page 21.)

### *OTHER BOROUGH TRAILS NEWS*

Also in borough news, the Trails Advisory Commission and borough Trails Coordinator recently recommended against a variance on required trail easements regarding a subdivision of land that affects the ADMA Jeff Studdert Sled Dog Trails next to Creamer's Field Refuge. (Starting at page 24 of the TAC packet.) The proposal has been put forth by the University of Alaska Land Management and The Conservation Fund as part a land swap. The commission and coordinator opposed the variance because the land swap does not guarantee protection of the trails, those that appears to be a final result of the swap.

- Trails Advisory Commission November meeting packet: <https://tinyurl.com/vrdu7y9>
- Contact information for the Trails Advisory Commission is here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxah9xv2>

## **ROSIE CREEK AREA OF TANANA STATE FOREST GETTING MORE ATTENTION**

A recently announced project by the Alaska State Division of Forestry has drawn attention to the recreation potential in the Rosie Creek area of the Tanana Valley State Forest.

The state Division of Forestry is applying for a grant to improve and sign some of the forestry roads in the area so that people are more willing to use it for recreation purposes. The plan also calls for creation of a trailhead off the Parks Highway. The project got a favorable response from the public during a public meeting this past fall.



The motivation behind the project is two-fold. One is that the division has no plans to log in that area for at least several decades. The other is that there is a desire on the Board of Forestry to explore more of the division's recreation mandate.

While the proposal has drawn attention to the recreation potential of the Rosie Creek area, many people already use the roads and trails informally winter and summer. However, some have been discouraged from venturing there because there are few directional signs, making it easy to get lost. For people interested in exploring the area on their own, this map can be useful: <https://tinyurl.com/uwvf75v>

Another way to get to know the area is to use it during an event, such as the Tanana River Challenge



winter endurance race (<http://tananariverchallenge.org/>), which is open to skiers, ski-jorers, fatbikers, and runners. The race, which is usually held in February or March, starts on and uses a portion of the Tanana River (unless the river is not sufficiently frozen), but it also uses many of the trails in the Rosie Creek area of the Tanana Valley State Forest. Organizers of the race keep many of the trails groomed during winter (though no set track for skiing).

In recent years, the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks has held a tour in the area earlier in the winter. The Fairbanks Cycle Club is also planning a ride there in the summer of 2020 as part of its Tuesday Night Mountain Bike Rides.

*(Photo of biker on Rosie Creek trails by Eric Troyer; photo of winter grooming of Rosie Creek trails by Drew Harrington)*

## SUPPORT PARKS AS PART OF YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

**BUY A PASS** The holiday shopping season is here. You can use it to encourage people to get outside AND support some of our greatest recreational assets. Buy a pass for yourself or someone else. Plus, buying early pays off for State Parks passes because after Jan. 1 the cost increases. Day-use passes will be \$60, boat launch passes will be \$150. The 2020 passes are good to use starting Nov. 15, 2019.

- Alaska State Parks annual pass: Support state parks during a time of tight state budgets. Permits are \$50 and, of course, your parking is then paid for when you park at a state parks trailhead that requires a fee. Passes are good for the calendar year. Annual boat launch passes are also available for \$100: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes> (Passes are also available at the DNR Public Information Centers and Recreational Equipment Inc. stores in Anchorage and Fairbanks; at visitor centers in Kenai, Soldotna and Homer; at 24 Mile Java on Chena Hot Springs Road in Fairbanks; and at the Seward Chamber of Commerce office.)
- National Park Service annual passes: The park service offers general passes for \$80. It also has a variety of other discounted or free passes for seniors, fourth-graders, people with disabilities, some volunteers, and members of the military: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>



## SEEN RECENTLY ON THE INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

### GOLDSTREAM VALLEY LIONS CLUB

November 4: Thanks to a donation from the Joel Switzer trust, the Goldstream Lions recently re-decked this bridge over Goldstream Creek. Joel was often involved in trail work in our community and for various dog mushing events, so fixing up some trails in his memory seems like a good fit. Thank you Joel!



## UAF NORTH CAMPUS

November 15: Big news trail users! The lighting system control module has been replaced and appears to be working reliably. The lights are scheduled to turn on at 6 a.m. off at dawn and on again at dusk off at 10 p.m. If you notice anything different while using the trails, or sections of lights that are out, please report them by calling 474-2648 or email [kaaxx@alaska.edu](mailto:kaaxx@alaska.edu). Thanks!

## BLM-WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

November 27: Several people recently called the BLM about this big new gully blocking the Colorado Creek Trail about 2.5 miles from the Colorado Creek Trailhead. This week the BLM trail crew put in a detour around the gully, so the trail is open again all the way to Wolf Run Cabin. BLM photo by Eric Yeager.



November 27: White Mountains trail conditions update: Additional snow is improving White Mountains trail conditions, though thin ice and open water on creeks remain a problem in some areas. Snow depth ranges from 4 or 5 inches at lower elevations to several feet up higher. All trails have been broken or groomed except for the Big Bend, Windy Creek, and Cache Mountain Loop trails, as well as parts of the Fossil Creek and Fossil Gap trails. Beaver Creek crossings are solid in most spots, but the crossing by Borealis-LeFevre Cabin may require an upstream detour until the ice thickens. Windy Gap Cabin remains hard to reach because of open water and shelf ice on Fossil Creek, but the other cabins should be accessible (though additional snow is forecast for coming days).

This week the trail crew put in a detour around a large gully that developed on the Colorado Creek Trail a few miles from the trailhead. They then opened that trail as far as Wolf Run Cabin. They have also been busy on the McKay Creek side of the trail system, and they plan on opening the Moose Creek Trail today.

Read the full trail conditions report here: [www.blm.gov/visit/white-mountains/trail-update](http://www.blm.gov/visit/white-mountains/trail-update). Please have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving!

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner's Winter Survival Guide
  - Outdoor winter activity good for health, happiness: <https://tinyurl.com/y6xlf47x>
  - Winter rambling is easy on nearby groomed trails: <https://tinyurl.com/y3azf6ej>
  - Explore Interior Alaska's many backcountry trails by snowmachine: <https://tinyurl.com/y4rwghyk>
- New Fairbanks Cycle Club page (Multi-day Winter Fatbike Trips near Fairbanks): <https://tinyurl.com/utsfcbp>
- Help pay for ADMA trails (News-Miner letter to editor): <https://tinyurl.com/veu65ze>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- New cabin opening on Compeau Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/y2s9yyok>
- Ward seeks to stamp out smoking in local parks: <https://tinyurl.com/vfgl83o>
- Fairbanks REI classes and events: <https://www.rei.com/events/p/us-ak-fairbanks>

## STATEWIDE

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### **NEW PORTAL ON PITTMAN-ROBERTSON FUNDS INCLUDES SURVEY**

**TAKE SURVEY** A new online portal has been created for the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, often referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act. This act provides funds to state fish and wildlife agencies for a variety of wildlife programs, including public access, which includes trails. The portal has a link to a survey asking the public about which types of hunter access projects people want to see happen. See the new portal here:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=access.hunter>

### **PLANNING RAMPS UP FOR JUNEAU OUTDOOR WEEK, MARCH 2 - 6**

**PARTICIPATE** We're so thankful for the bounty of outdoor riches this state offers. With the arrival of the holidays, so too come thoughts about the coming year and planning for our next big event that shines a spotlight on outdoor industry business concerns and causes: Juneau Outdoor Week, March 2 - 6. It's a legislative fly-in plus more as businesses and cause-related partners host and participate in events that increase awareness of Alaska's outdoor recreation sector.

We hope you'll consider sharing your thoughts, exuberance and issues you care about during in the upcoming Juneau Outdoor Week, March 2 - 6. This one-pager Juneau Outdoor Week Info explains how easy it is to get involved (<https://tinyurl.com/rkow6oh>). If you want to join us to meet with legislators and/or host or participate in an event highlighting your business or cause, just let us know on this super simple and quick Juneau Outdoor Week Pledge Form (<https://tinyurl.com/tb62edb>). The form is just like it sounds, a pledge to participate. We can work out the details in these next months leading up to the first week of March.

*(From Alaska Outdoor Alliance newsletter)*

### **FIRST DAY OUTINGS USUALLY HELD IN ALASKA STATE PARKS**

Alaska State Parks encourages Alaskans to celebrate the New Year by enjoying the great outdoors in their state parks. As of press time, no outings had been scheduled, but state parks and local volunteer groups often host hike/ski excursions in several Alaska state park units on New Year's Day. These free, guided events are part of the national First Day Hikes initiative sponsored by state park systems throughout the United States. See more about First Day Hikes at: <https://tinyurl.com/www5cu7>

### **STATEWIDE LINKS**

- A vision for the Alaska trail system of the future: <https://tinyurl.com/y2xdh4op>

- Hunting trails don't always end in obvious places, but they all have turning points: <https://tinyurl.com/qwsbaay>

#### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- After Talkeetna, Confluence Gets 2020 Vision: <https://tinyurl.com/yy99z538>
- State Board of Forestry plans December 3 meeting (includes proposed partnership fostering outdoor recreation in Tanana Valley State Forest near Fairbanks): <https://tinyurl.com/tt9jl92>
- It's never too early for avalanche safety: <https://tinyurl.com/t835pc4>

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## NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ADVANCES PUBLIC LANDS AND TRAIL LEGISLATION

Recently the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted to advance two bills that would create new trails and ensure our existing trails and public lands are maintained for years to come. The LWCF Permanent Funding Act (S.1081) and the Restore Our Parks Act (S.500) are ready for a vote on the Senate floor! See the American Hiking Society's letter regarding Land and Water Conservation Fund legislation:

<https://tinyurl.com/sh9e33c>

*(From the American Hiking Society Paperless Trail newsletter)*

### 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)

#### TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": [www.americantrails.org/communications/newsletter](http://www.americantrails.org/communications/newsletter)

#### VOLUNTEER

- American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh95kp8>
- Volunteer Stewardship Tools: [www.americantrails.org/resources/volunteer-stewardship-tools](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/volunteer-stewardship-tools)
- American Trails Volunteer Portal: [www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer](http://www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer)
- Conservation International VIP newsletter (November): <https://tinyurl.com/y5om7wl6>
- American Hiking Society's 2020 Alternative Spring Break schedule: <http://tinyurl.com/yxbnlema>

## ADVOCATE

- Write in support of the American Hiking Society's letter regarding Land and Water Conservation Fund legislation:

## FUNDING

- National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program (**deadline Jan 16**): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

## TRAIL GUIDES

- And did those feet ... 15 pilgrim trails in the UK and Europe: <https://tinyurl.com/y5o3ocop>
- Easy Phoenix Hiking Trails To Experience The Desert Environment: <https://tinyurl.com/s8gcejl>
- A Complete Guide to Grand Canyon Hiking: The Best Tours, Trails, and Tips: <https://tinyurl.com/vmngqq6>
- Avoid the traffic on these four scenic bike trails in Florida: <https://tinyurl.com/sy3vqwt>
- The Best Bike Trails Throughout Florida: [www.flamingomag.com/2019/11/25/florida-bike-trails/](http://www.flamingomag.com/2019/11/25/florida-bike-trails/)

## STUDIES

- 15 Minutes of Walking On A Daily Basis Can Change Your Body Drastically: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxreyhq>
- Study: Rail-trails inject \$930M annually into PA economy: <https://tinyurl.com/r5h9uyt>

## TRAILS AND ECONOMICS

- Trails spur economic development and more in northwest Indiana: <https://tinyurl.com/y4vqgpd2>
- Hatfield McCoy Trails Bring Tourists To Southern West Virginia: <https://tinyurl.com/yx8q28lk>
- Why cities build MTB parks, and how to convince yours: <https://tinyurl.com/y363a42p>
- Evidence of Many Varieties of Economic Benefits Linked to Trails: <https://tinyurl.com/t7pjrud>

## OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Ramps for Accessible Trails and Shared-Use Pathways: <https://tinyurl.com/yv9bclx>
- National Recreation Trails Photo Contest (**deadline Dec 15**): <https://tinyurl.com/y72do9vl>
- New Rules Will Help the PCT Combat Overcrowding: <https://tinyurl.com/w2hy75m>
- **Apply** to Be a 2020 NextGen Trail Leader (Am Hiking Society; ddline Dec 6): <https://tinyurl.com/rl7xybj>
- Alternative Break Scholarships for School Groups: <https://tinyurl.com/y436r6z5>
- Our Public Lands Are Broke: Is It Time for a 'Backpack Tax?': <https://tinyurl.com/u2qmhwl>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Outdoor-recreation fans are joining together to flex lobbying muscle: <https://tinyurl.com/tbz7zw3>

Interior Trails Newsletter is a free monthly email newsletter 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, from which this newsletter is excerpted.

DISCLAIMER: Interior Trails Newsletter is not a product 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.