

INTERIOR TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

September 2019

SPECIAL STATE BUDGET REPORT

STATE TRAIL PROGRAMS STILL ALIVE AFTER BUDGET BATTLE

Four state trail-related programs have survived the recent battle over the state budget. However, two of the programs were significantly affected.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Snowmobile Trails Program (STP) now have one less person to administer them. In addition, the State Legislature required that RTP funds be split between the state parks division and local community organizations. (Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration had earlier tried to distribute RTP funds solely to state parks.) As a result, state employees are still working out how to administer the programs. Applications for them are not yet available. When all that is finalized, the Department of Natural Resources will issue an announcement to let people know they can again apply.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) saw some budget wrangling but survived. The program, which is not solely for trails but considers them "high priority projects," is available to local and regional governments. A call for applications for a new round of LWCF projects should be coming soon.

For more information on the RTP, LWCF, and the STP (also referred to as the Snowmobile Grant Program) see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/index.htm>

Matching funds for the Pittman-Robertson program also survived. Like the LWCF, the Pittman-Robertson program is not solely for trails, but it does pay for projects that increase hunter access. In an August interview with the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (<http://tinyurl.com/y3dmh7qd>), Doug Vincent-Lang, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, said "over the next few years, the department plans to use funds for projects including things like bolstering airstrips and restoring trails and parking lots."

INTERIORWIDE

DENALI BOROUGH SEEKS TO IMPROVE BISON GULCH TRAIL PARKING

Below is an excerpt from a recent Kris Capps column in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner:

The (Denali) borough is close to gaining approval of a federal grant that would improve and move the parking area at Bison Gulch, a popular hiking trail south of Healy.

The trail is located at Mile 243.5 Parks Highway. But the parking lot is on the east side of the highway

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)

and the trailhead is on the other side of the highway. Easily accessible, the trail offers easy access to alpine hiking and spectacular views along the way.

The project the borough has in mind would move the parking lot to the same side of the highway as the trailhead and the trail would be re-routed so it doesn't go straight up the mountain.

The project has a price tag of about \$450,000. The borough would contribute only \$10,000 to the project, according to Denali Borough Mayor Clay Walker.

The grant is intended to improve access to federal lands. The trail at Bison Gulch leads into Denali National Park.

See the full column in Fairbanks Daily News-Miner: <http://tinyurl.com/y2trjhut>

TRAIL-LADEN BLOCK OF NORTH POLE LAND WITHDRAWN FROM SALE

ADVOCATE Below are excerpts from an email update from Cam Webb, who has been spearheading the "Keep Peede Trails Public" effort. The group has been trying to get some Fairbanks North Star Borough land in the North Pole area set aside for recreational use, especially for motorized, multi-use trails. The land had been nominated for sale in the Salcha-Badger Development Plan. See the group's website at:

<http://peedetrails4all.org/>

The Mayor has decided to withdraw the main Peede Rd. Tract (166 acres) from the Borough land sale, citing the need for more detailed planning of the Chena Annex/Heritage Forest area. You can see the final land sale Ordinance here:

<http://fnsb.us/assembly/OrdinanceResolutions/2019-36.pdf>

So we can continue to enjoy public access to this area for the near future! Thanks to all of you for your support.

*The Assembly work session, when the land sale will be presented in detail to the Assembly by the senior Land Manager, will be on September 5. The Public Hearing and adoption of the Ordinance will be on September 12, concurrent with the adoption of the Salcha-Badger (S-B) Development Plan. If you are still interested in testifying in support of public use of this land, or would like to thank the Mayor or the authors of the S-B Plan (which recognizes our concerns), **please come and speak on September 12.***

Please note that the two 40-acre lots we were also campaigning for are still for sale (the Florence & Blalock lots, see map). Opinions vary on whether to accept this, or to continue to voice the view that all sales should be delayed until after more planning and review by the Borough and residents. If you are concerned about this ongoing plan to sell the Borough land in the Chena Annex/Heritage Forest area, please testify on September 12.

A Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story on Mayor Ward's decision to withdraw the land from the land sale is here:

<http://tinyurl.com/y2hkolqn>

PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD ON ORDINANCE AFFECTING FAIRBANKS' CRANBERRY TRAIL

COMMENT Also at the September 12 Borough Assembly meeting, an ordinance that would, among other things, accept a dedication of a portion of the Cranberry Trail will also be up for public hearing. A block of borough-owned land over which the trail runs, which is in the hills north of the Goldstream Valley, is also slated for public sale in the ordinance. Anyone wishing to comment on the ordinance can do so at the meeting or by emailing Assembly members at: <http://tinyurl.com/y5a2oncp>

The ordinance (# 2019-36) can be read here: <http://tinyurl.com/y2oor7mr>

SEEN RECENTLY ON THE INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS AND RECREATION

Aug 14: Are you a Borough resident with an idea for a project? NOMINATE IT TODAY! Forms are available at www.fnsb.us/CIP

This week is the launch of the new FNSB Capital Improvement Program, or CIP. The new CIP has been rebuilt from the ground up as a transparent public process to evaluate, prioritize, and fund capital projects.

FAIRBANKS AREA HIKING CLUB FAN PAGE

Aug 20: It's sad when a friend visits from out of state and one of the things they notice most about our trails while they travelled is the TP on the trails. This was at wickersham ridge trail. 4 times we counted.

It is degradable but boy it would be nice if folks just put it under a rock or root or something if they have to use TP.

Besides the TP it was a beautiful day last Saturday

FAIRBANKS SUMMER TRAILS CHALLENGE ENDS THIS MONTH

The Fairbanks Trails Challenge ends on September 30.

The challenge is free for anyone who wants to participate. Just find the signs and photograph yourself with the sign in the background. Then share your "selfie" photo on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram by typing "#FNSBtrails" in your post, OR post your picture on our FNSB Parks & Rec Facebook page, OR email parks@fnsb.us your photos.

To help you find the signs, download the Fairbanks Trail Challenge booklet at: <http://tinyurl.com/yx9buqnm>

If you can prove you made it to at least 10 Summer Challenge Trails you will earn the elusive "Trailblazer Award" and be placed in a drawing for awesome prizes from our sponsors! Questions? Contact Bryant Wright at bwright@fnsb.us or 907-459-7401.

For more info and how to register see:

- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/334369447465250/>
- Trails Challenge webpage: <http://tinyurl.com/y3lq8rdn>

ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILER READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS



The trails building and maintenance season is not over yet. Remember that Alaska Trails has a mobile tool cache available in the Fairbanks area to loan to organized trail groups in the Interior. The trailers were upgraded recently and have many trail tools including mcleods, pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much, much more. If you would like to borrow one of the caches, please contact Geoffrey Orth (gcorth@straydogs.us).

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Comment Period for Kantishna, Wonder Lake Planning Extended to Oct 31: <http://tinyurl.com/y5zmjxhk>
- BLM issues first review of Ambler Road project: <http://tinyurl.com/y2x9thhr>
- Nenana River boat launch's condition ramps up: <http://tinyurl.com/y2yul3cw>

STATEWIDE

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY TO BE CELEBRATED IN SEPTEMBER

VOLUNTEER At least three events will be held in celebration of National Public Lands Day. More are expected to be listed as the day—held this year on Saturday, September 28—comes nearer. Of the three events listed so far, one is definitely trail-related: the Alaska Trail Stewards trail work party on the Middle Fork Trail. For more information on that see: <http://tinyurl.com/y4p9fz2g>

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer events for public lands, held annually on the fourth Saturday in September. NPLD brings together hundreds of thousands of individuals and organizational volunteers to help restore America's public lands. This year marks the 25th NPLD. The event began in 1979. For more info see: <https://www.neefusa.org/npld>

CONFLUENCE ON OUTDOORS SET FOR SEPTEMBER IN TALKEETNA

Registration is now open for the Fourth Annual Confluence: Summit on the Outdoors, which will happen in Talkeetna on Sept. 25-27.



Confluence brings the outdoor recreation community together to explore and share ways to grow and promote Alaska's flourishing recreation economy. This year's conference will have an emphasis on strengthening gateway communities. Town planners, economic development staff and volunteer boards, rec planners, public land managers and elected officials will convene to learn, share and leave this event with more tools and resources to strengthen connections between communities and public lands for better economic, health and social well-being.

The summit is sponsored by Confluence AK whose mission is to strengthen businesses, improve lives and stimulate local economies through Alaska's outdoor recreation sector. To see the full agenda, go to <https://www.confluenceak.com/agenda>. To register, go to <https://www.confluenceak.com/talkeetna-registration>. For information on Confluence AK, go to <https://www.confluenceak.com/home>.

From What's Up? by Peg Tileston

STATEWIDE LINKS

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Trails, campgrounds and cabins reopen as Swan Lake Fire dies down: <http://tinyurl.com/y5jhlhph>
- Winds push smoke from Swan Lake fire to Kenai communities, closing trails: <http://tinyurl.com/y5oz4hzf>
- Hikers enjoy organized outing on Grace Ridge (Homer): <http://tinyurl.com/y34jtl3a>
- Albert Loop Trail at Eagle River Nature Center is temporarily closed: <http://tinyurl.com/yxaag6ye>
- Reopened Maud Road improves access to shooting range, Jim Lake trails: <http://tinyurl.com/y2fqjb8k>
- State Parks is hiring a seasonal trails tech for MatSu area (closes Sept 5): <http://tinyurl.com/yy5nbrs6>
- Government Peak Recreation Area gets wheelchair-accessible trail: <http://tinyurl.com/y5urqya2>

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Now you see it, now you don't: Trail Mix removes 4-ton boulder from trail: <http://tinyurl.com/y2u5ls96>
- Who owns Haines' trails?: <http://tinyurl.com/yxbxe6eo>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Top Ten Cabins on the Tongass National Forest: <http://tinyurl.com/yx93ce2t>
- Anchorage cyclist breaks 8-day barrier in 1,053-mile race in Kyrgyzstan: <http://tinyurl.com/y4ojhzb8>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails news publications: <http://www.americantrails.org/trailtracks/index.html>
- Conservation International VIP newsletter (Sept): <http://tinyurl.com/yy7hfjqq>

VOLUNTEERING

- American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh95kp8>
- Volunteer Stewardship Tools: www.americantrails.org/resources/volunteer-stewardship-tools
- American Trails [Volunteer Portal: www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer](http://www.americantrails.org/connect/volunteer)

ADVOCACY

- Tell Congress to Protect, Preserve, and Expand Trails and Public Lands: <http://tinyurl.com/y653vuo2>

TRAIL GUIDES

- 6 of Atlanta's best bike trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yyjgr92f>
- 11 Perfect Fall Hikes You Must Do In South Florida: <http://tinyurl.com/y4xbdoxh>
- Ten of the Best Places to Paddle in National Forests: <http://tinyurl.com/yye8q2sm>

FUNDING

- **IDEA:** Old Parking Meters Are Helping Revitalize Colorado Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yxkcsvr3>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- The Walmart Heirs Putting Arkansas on the Fat-Tire Map: <http://tinyurl.com/y3bsa75p>
- The Controversial Plan to Protect America's Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yyv9drx8>
- Is YouTube Good for Long-Distance Trails?: <https://thetrek.co/youtube-good-long-distance-trails/>
- 6 Solutions For Managing Multi-Use Trails And Conflict: <http://tinyurl.com/yyr37nq2>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- Canada opens world's longest hiking trail that stretches coast to coast: <http://tinyurl.com/y6am4jk8>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Living Near Trees, Not Just Green Space, Improves Wellbeing: <http://tinyurl.com/yxkwn455>
- Why strange balls of poop appear to be rolling down trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yy7tl58u>
- The Forest is the Therapist: <http://tinyurl.com/y2cholru>

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. 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.