

# **INTERIOR TRAILS QUARTERLY**

**Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska**

**March 2019**

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

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### **TRAILS WOULD FEEL BITE OF GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET**

Trails have not escaped the axe in Gov. Mike Dunleavy's proposed budget, but it's not always easy to see the effect.

One obvious affect is that the Snowmobile Trails Program is slated to be cut. A less obvious but much larger cut is that of a grant administrator who works on the federal Recreational Trails Program. It is unclear how that will affect the RTP program. It also appears that the administration is opting out of another federal program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Other less direct cuts will surely affect trail construction and maintenance across the state.

More information on possible effects was sought, but the state employees contacted have been instructed to direct all queries to the governor's office, which has not yet responded to our request (and has not been responding to numerous other requests from other media outlets on other stories).

An overall view of how the Dunleavy administration is approaching this and similar cuts can be found in an Anchorage Daily News story on the administration's approach.

"While the governor has repeatedly said he wants to make sure spending doesn't exceed revenue, he has not explained his plans for delivering those services under a smaller budget."

See the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/yy5zyt29>

Trails advocates who want to protect these programs need to lobby the governor and the legislature.

- Gov. Dunleavy's contact info: <https://gov.alaska.gov/contact/>
- Alaska State Legislature contact info: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/>

### ***RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION REDUCED***

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is by far the largest source of trail funds in the state. Last year it brought more than \$1.4 million to the state for trail development. The money comes from the federal government and is based on fuel taxes paid by off-road motorized vehicle owners. However, the state must pay about \$200,000 to administer the funds. (Another \$107,000 of administration is paid through the federal funds.)

Currently, the program is administered primarily by two state employees, the head of the Alaska State Trails Program, Darcy Harris, and a grants administrator, Steve Neel. Gov. Dunleavy is proposing to cut the grants administrator position, leaving just one person to administer the program. (This could not be verified for certain by the employees and the governor's office hasn't yet replied.) How this would affect trails in the state is unclear, but at least one trail

advocate worries that RTP funding would go solely to state parks. Currently about half the funding goes to local governments and nonprofit groups.

Geoff Orth, a trails consultant and former president of Alaska Trails, believes that local governments and nonprofit groups will be cut out of the process in order to make the program manageable for one person to administer. State employees know the state bureaucracy and therefore are less likely to require support. (A knowledgeable state employee indicated that this is a valid concern.)



If that were to happen, it would make a big impact on trail development in Alaska. In recent years RTP grants have funded a wide variety of trail projects by local governments and nonprofits, such as the Kincaid and Hillside singletrack trails in Anchorage, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area trails and the Ester Dome Singletrack in Fairbanks, the Liewer Community Trail in Delta Junction, singletrack trails at Tsalteshi in Soldotna, and Mosquito Cove Trail work in Sitka.

Again, this is solely speculation, but there will be some sort of impact if one of two primary administrators is cut from the program.

*(Photo: Working in 2015 on the Government Peak Recreation Area singletrack bike trail, which was partially funded by a Recreational Trails Program grant; from the Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers website.)*

#### SNOWMOBILE TRAIL PROGRAM CUT

While the Snowmobile Trail Program exists to fund a variety of snowmobile trails projects, in recent years it has funded just trail grooming due to decreased funding. However, that funding has still been significant. Last year, nearly \$160,000 was distributed for grooming trails in a variety of areas in the Southeast, Southcentral and Interior regions of the state. (For a list of those areas, including maps, see: <http://tinyurl.com/yys47ro6>.)



The program is funded through snowmobile registration fees. Rep. Mark Neuman (R – Big Lake) has introduced a bill to increase registration fees for snowmachines from \$10 to \$20 every two years. Ostensibly, that was to increase funding for the Snowmobile Trail Program. Support by snowmachine owners for that bill will probably evaporate if the increased funds do not go to snowmachine programs. (Note: The Alaska Constitution does not allow for dedicated funds, but the Alaska Legislature has appropriated funds to the snowmobile program based on the registration fees collected.)

The Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC) is responsible for reviewing and recommending funding for the program to the state trails office. Dan Mayfield, co-chair of SnowTRAC, recently told Anchorage's KTUU television news that ending the program would also end snowmobile trail maintenance crews.

"The end result of that will be that the SnowTRAC Program will end, and grooming organizations across the state would not have that money available to them to groom the trails," Mayfield told KTUU. "Which will ultimately make the trails less safe."

For the full interview see: <http://tinyurl.com/yxpw9nua>

The Snowmobile Trails Program was cut by Gov. Bill Walker in 2015, but was put back in the budget after a strong lobbying campaign.

*(Dan Mayfield photo: Snowmobile grooming funded by the Snowmobile Trail Program.)*

#### *PARTICIPATION IN LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND MAY END*

Gov. Dunleavy's budget apparently does not authorize accepting money from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This program is not solely for trails, but trails are considered a "high priority project" and many trail projects in Alaska have been funded through LWCF. The program has brought in almost \$40 million in federal funds since it was started in 1965.

Why access to this program would be denied is a head-scratcher. It may be a mistake. If so, hopefully it is rectified soon. The program would make more than \$1 million available to Alaska for this coming year.

LWCF grants are available only to state, local, and regional entities (city, borough, state and tribal governments) that have legal authority for public parks and outdoor recreation facilities. These grants require a 50-50 match, however, at least some of those matching funds have historically been paid for by the local and regional authorities.

"Typically, the State of Alaska opts to keep half of the federal apportionment each year for State projects (which the State needs to match 50-50); and offers the other half of the federal apportionment to local communities in a competitive grant round," according to Grants Administrator Jean Ayers.

Permanent authorization of this program was a large part of the federal public lands bill recently passed by the federal congress. See Nationwide News and Notices for more.

#### *OTHER POSSIBLE AFFECTS*

Other ways Gov. Dunleavy's budget cuts might affect trails are less clear. However, here are a couple of possibilities:

- Dramatic cuts to local governments will probably result in less funding for those trails, such as in the Municipality of Anchorage.
- Dramatic cuts to the University of Alaska Fairbanks may result in dramatically less funding for UAF's extensive trail system.
- Staffing for the Department of Natural Resources could be cut. Very few people in state government work solely on trails, but many deal with trails as part of their jobs. If positions are cut, other duties may take precedence over trails.
- Pullouts along roads that offer parking for access to trailheads could see less maintenance, including snowplowing, as the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities focuses on keeping high-traffic roads clear.

## INTERIORWIDE

### SKYLINE RIDGE TRAILS POSSIBLY AFFECTED BY LAND SUBDIVISION

Cook Inlet Region Inc., an Alaska Native corporation best known by its acronym CIRI, is considering subdividing some of its land bordering Skyline Ridge Park on the ridge north of Farmer's Loop Road.

Several trails cross the corporation's land, but only the Skyline Ridge Trail is included in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan, which guarantees that it will get an easement if the land is subdivided.



Other trails that cross CIRI land but are not on the trails plan include the southwestern portions of Secret Trail and a trail sometimes called Heart of Darkness Trail. Subdivision of the land does not necessarily mean the trails will be lost to use, but they currently do not have any legal protections.

Other major trails in the area are already protected by being in the 470-acre Skyline Ridge Park. These include After Hours, the Skyline-to-Goldstream Connector, the majority of Secret Trail, and about half of Heart of Darkness Trail.

(The park and the several of the trails can be seen here, though the lower portion of Secret Trail is not shown: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh4k6ql>.)

Little is known about CIRI's plans except that the corporation's realtor has approached the borough to find out what is required for subdividing, according to Borough Trails Coordinator Bryant Wright.

"There has been no formal application to subdivide their property and no indication of exactly which parcels they are interested in subdividing," Wright wrote in an email. "More will be determined if/when they formally pursue a land subdivision or any other action regulated by Borough code."

CIRI owns more than 330 acres of land abutting the park, almost all of it to the south and southwest. The land is in six parcels. Two are large, at 160 and 150 acres, another is 10 acres, and three total 12.5 acres near the towers at the top of Ski Boot Hill Road.

*(Satellite photo shows CIRI land shaded in green, Skyline Ridge Park is large block of land to north and east of CIRI land.)*

### MUSHING TRAIL MAY GET REROUTE, PROTECTION IN LAND DEAL

A trail that is part of the Alaska Dog Mushing Association trail system may get rerouted and an easement as part of a land deal that could transfer more than 500 acres of University of Alaska (UA) land to a nonprofit conservation group.

The trail in question is the 19.8-Mile Trail. The part that may get rerouted is the southern portion of the light blue section in the lower left part of this map: <http://tinyurl.com/y6dmeig7>

The nonprofit Conservation Fund wants to purchase a large block of UA land adjacent to the western portion of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. If the purchase goes through, the land may be added to the refuge. Portions of several important Alaska Dog Musher's Association (ADMA) trails run through the land.

No change to the trails is expected for the purchase lands, which would involve two parcels. However, as part of the deal one of the parcels would be divided into two, therefore "subdivided."

A portion of the 19.8-Mile Trail runs across that parcel as well as land that UA leases to Great Northwest, Inc., for peat and gravel extraction. (This section of trail has no permanent legal public access and has already been moved once to accommodate Great Northwest activities.) As part of the land deal with the Conservation Fund, UA would like that trail moved off the land it leases to Great Northwest.

FNSB Trails Coordinator Bryant Wright is working with UA, the ADMA and the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association to find a suitable reroute for that trail.

Because the deal involves a subdivision of land, that portion of the 19.8-Mile Trail is guaranteed an easement by the borough's subdivision code (Title 17) because it is in the Fairbanks North Star Borough Recreational Trails Plan. Borough code also allows trails to be rerouted at the owner's expense so long as the route is of comparable quality and maintains continuity with the rest of the trail system.

Another trail that connects College Road to the ADMA trails via the 19.8-Mile Trail is not a part of the FNSB trails plan, and so would not be included in the reroute. This trail, which comes out behind Beaver Sports, would not necessarily lose connection to the ADMA system, but it would be up to independent trail users to re-establish a connection to the ADMA system.

## **BLM EXPLAINS ABOUT FAMOUS 'ICE LAKES' IN WHITE MOUNTAINS**

Several people have recently asked about the "Ice Lakes," which are often mentioned in the White Mountains trail conditions reports. This is an informal name for an area near the headwaters of Fossil Creek below Cache Mountain Divide. There are no actual lakes there, but this section of the creek turns into a wide, 1.5-mile-long expanse of ice most winters.

Those who have made numerous trips on the Cache Mountain Loop Trail know that conditions on the Ice Lakes can range from flat, snow-covered ice to lumpy, watery mess. The BLM tends not to place trail markers on the ice because the conditions (and best route across it) change frequently during the winter. This week, though, the crew placed some temporary markers that should help in low-visibility conditions or darkness. The BLM crew finds that in general, you're better off heading down the middle of the ice, rather than skirting the edge, where snow often conceals deep pools of water.

*(From BLM-White Mountains National Recreation Area Facebook page; BLM photo by Craig McCaa)*



## **BOROUGH SEEKING INPUT ON SALCHA-BADGER ROAD AREA PLAN**

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is seeking input on a land use plan in the Salcha-Badger Road area. A recent Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story on the issue mentioned trails twice

- “A survey was conducted last summer, and 70 percent of respondents indicated they want trails, recreation and housing promoted in the area.”
- “The plan discusses trails, calling for the dedication of trails during the subdivision process. A systematic approach for trail maintenance is also needed, according to the draft plan.”

For more information see the News-Miner story (<http://tinyurl.com/y53nqvz>) and check out the plan’s webpage (<http://salchabadgerplan.com/>).

## **FAIRBANKS TRAILS CHALLENGE OFFERS REASONS TO GET OUTSIDE**

Want to get outside more this winter? Take the Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge and use the handy trail guide for instructions, tips, parking directions and trail maps! Grab a buddy or go it alone, but don't miss out on the fun! Read more here: <http://tinyurl.com/ybaxsarb>

Another way to experience borough trails is through the borough’s Try-Athlon series. Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/y4llrdsf>

## **FAIRBANKS RENDEZVOUS TO EXPLORE OUTDOOR REC INDUSTRY**

Fairbanks outdoor recreation industry businesses, supporting organizations, public land managers and civic leaders are invited to a meeting in March aimed at sharing thoughts on the effects of the outdoor recreation economic sector and exploring opportunities for working together to strengthen the local economy.

The Fairbanks Rendezvous will start at 7 p.m. on Wednesday,, March 27, at the Side Room at The Pub, in the Wood Center on the University of Fairbanks campus, 1731 S. Chandalar. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Rendezvous organizer Lee Hart explained the meeting series is a chance to raise awareness about outdoor recreation economic outcomes. More importantly, the goal is to understand the unique industry challenges and opportunities facing outdoor recreation stakeholders and hopefully discover areas of common ground from coastal communities to interior villages.

In September of last year, the federal government released the first economic analysis of the the outdoor recreation sector and the results amazed even US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. “The numbers . . . are simply phenomenal,” Ross said in an address to Congress. “They show that the outdoor recreation industry generated \$412 billion in revenue in 2016, accounting for 2.2 percent of U.S. GDP in 2016. That is a very, very large number. To put this industry in perspective, it is a bigger contributor to GDP than the chemical manufacturing sector at 2.1 percent, and all the nation’s utilities, at 1.5 percent of GDP.”

For more information see [www.confluenceAK.com](http://www.confluenceAK.com) or contact Lee Hart ([leehartAK@gmail.com](mailto:leehartAK@gmail.com))

*(From ConfluenceAK press release)*

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

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- Rezone tangled up in trail-use conflict at Creamer's Field: <http://tinyurl.com/y6ten9wg>
- Stops, starts and ample treats keep the dog team ready for the trail: <http://tinyurl.com/ycbgfv93>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Interior Alaska Land Trust is hiring a Conservation Project Coordinator: <http://tinyurl.com/ycywbdbh>
- Alaska's Interior finally has ample snow, and longer days to enjoy it: <http://tinyurl.com/yxeg84xn>
- Artist-In-Residence Pinnell Mountain Nat Rec Trail (Applic deadline March 3): <http://tinyurl.com/y23wnkd4>

## LINKS TO INTERIOR TRAIL INFORMATION

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The web and other sources have lots of information about trails in Interior Alaska (and statewide), 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))*

## STATEWIDE

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR 2019 STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

The Alaska Trails 2019 Statewide Trails Conference will be held April 18-20 at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

This year's conference keynote speaker is Lisa Maloney, author of the soon-to-be-released *Day Hiking Southcentral Alaska*. Lisa has lived in Alaska for more than 25 years. A former outdoors columnist for *The Anchorage Press*, she also covered a nationwide hiking and backpacking beat for *About.com*, served as senior editor at *Alaska* magazine, authored the award-winning travel guidebook *Moon Alaska*, and contributes outdoors and lifestyle articles to a number of publications.

Lisa and publisher Mountaineers Books are donating 1% of the proceeds of *Day Hiking Southcentral Alaska* to Alaska Trails!



A pre-conference training with Mike Shields will again be held. This course will be Terrain Dynamics and will be held April 16-17. It will include a field day at Russian Jack Springs Park South. Class size is limited, so email soon to reserve a spot ([steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org](mailto:steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org)).

Alaska Trails' annual conference provides trail users and the wider public a statewide opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals. Government agencies, trail builders and non-profits will be able to share what they have learned and engage in conversations with others to share best practices and new ideas. There are many ways to enjoy Alaska's trails and the conference brings them together all under one roof. Trails and outdoor recreation are a public health asset and an economic engine for the state and the trails conference seeks to raise the profile of trails and their importance to Alaska. There will be an Active Transportation track again this year on Friday, April 19.

For agenda, registration and other details, please go to: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html> and for more information, contact Steve Cleary at [steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org](mailto:steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org) or 907-334-8049. Updates on the 2019 conference will be posted on our Facebook Event page at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/362704607889730/>

*(Photo of "Physics for Trail Builders" session from the 2016 Statewide Trails Conference)*

## ALASKA STUDENT CONSERVATION GROUP SEEKING APPLICANTS

Applications are being accepted for the 2019 AK Corps Teams for the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to work with multiple state and federal partners throughout Alaska. Work projects will be a mix of trail construction and maintenance, invasive species removal and fuels reduction for wildfire management. Project schedules will vary throughout the summer depending on partner's needs. Members can expect to use basic hand tools, power tools, and chainsaws. Teams consist of 5 members and 1 leader and this group of 6 will remain together for the entirety of the season. Season begins on May 13 with Corps Member Training. To see the full position and application information, go to <https://www.thesca.org/serve/position/2019-ak-corps-teams/po-00726989>.

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

## STATE PARKS POSITIONS INCLUDE TRAIL DUTIES

Alaska State Parks is looking for seasonal employees and volunteers. Positions include trail crew and backcountry ranger assistant. Applicants must be at least 18 years old.

- For more information on the volunteer program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/index.htm>
- For more information on Alaska State Parks seasonal jobs see: <http://tinyurl.com/7mog8q3>

## RIVER FORECAST SITE KEEPS TRACK OF SNOW DEPTH



The National Weather Service's River Forecast Center has a website that tracks snow depths at many locations across the state. In the spring, summer, and fall, the site also tracks several things regarding rivers, including how breakup is going and what river conditions are like. See the snow depth page for the website at: [http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/Snow\\_Depth](http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/Snow_Depth)



## ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC HIRING FOR SUMMER FIELD SEASON

Alaska Geographic is currently hiring Summer Field Leaders for the 2019 summer season for a number of positions including Kayak Guide And Field Leader, Backpacking Field Leader, Youth Trail-Work Expedition Leader. All trips take place from June-August. Mandatory paid training will take place May 17-19. Expeditions vary in length from 1 to 2 weeks. A full season of work is available for the right candidate. Field Leaders are required to have a current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) or Wilderness First Aid (WFA) medical certification, depending on the position. To find out more about available positions or to apply, send a resumé and cover letter to William Melton at [wmelton@alaskageographic.org](mailto:wmelton@alaskageographic.org) or call 907-771-8466 for more information.

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

## 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.

For more information on "Pick. Click. Give" (<http://www.pickclickgive.org>). To go directly to the Alaska Trails "Pick. Click. Give." page <http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

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### SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- (Kodiak) Island Trails Network's "trails update": <http://tinyurl.com/y9dgazzd>
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Job Opportunities (incl trails positions): <http://tinyurl.com/y6cge5ln>
- Winter Adventure Book challenges people to explore Mat-Su: <http://tinyurl.com/y9t6u58a>
- Kodiak Outdoor Film Festival (submissions due March 29): <http://www.islandtrails.org/film.html>
- Snowmachiner tells story of Hatcher Pass avalanche: <http://tinyurl.com/y2slkxsu>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Exploring the Chugach: <http://tinyurl.com/y6suw2gf>

*SOUTHEAST LINKS*

- Treadwell Ditch Trail Renovation Project: <http://tinyurl.com/yy7jnrh3>
- A 'secret' trail becomes new and exciting again: <http://tinyurl.com/y4s7ghqv>

*SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL*

- Senate passes the decade's biggest public lands package: <http://tinyurl.com/y37o8y7f>
  - See more on this lands bill passage in Nationwide News and Notices
- The 2018-2021 STIP Amendment 2 is approved: <http://notice.alaska.gov/192921>
- Hiking old mining trails is a reminder that one's man trash is another man's artifact: <http://tinyurl.com/yxeyjrgk>
- North Slope Borough hopes snow trails offer safe path over tundra: <http://tinyurl.com/y5nknmqa>
- Alaska State Parks welcomes first "Park Ambassador": <http://tinyurl.com/y5tb83ct>
- Confluence Rendezvous meetings focus on growing outdoor industry. Next one is March 5 in Juneau in conjunction with Second Annual Fly-In for Outdoor Recreation: <http://tinyurl.com/y2rb3djm>
  - The Second Annual Fly-In for Outdoor Recreation (March 5 – 7): <http://tinyurl.com/yxkbjdq8>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Active vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/y4am69vf>

## NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

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### **HISTORIC PUBLIC LANDS LEGISLATION TO BECOME LAW**

Every so often Congress overcomes its partisan battles and joins together to enact critical legislation. Today is one of those days! Congress just passed a Public Lands Package (S.47) in nearly unanimous bipartisan fashion (92-8 in the Senate and 363-62 in the House of Representatives). The legislation is far-reaching in scope (read it all here: [www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/47](http://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/47)). Among the many provisions it creates new National Monuments honoring civil rights icons and Civil War heroes, provides over 1.3 million acres of new wilderness designations, and prohibits mining near two National Parks. Highlighted below are some of the key provisions for hikers and public land lovers.

#### *PERMANENT REAUTHORIZATION OF LWCF*

The biggest provision of the bill is the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF is America's most important program to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the nation. The program has funded nearly one thousand trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from National Parks, Forests and Wildlife Refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states. LWCF funding has provided for the completion of the Appalachian Trail and the building

of major segments of the Pacific Crest Trail, and at least ten other National Scenic and Historic Trails.

Until now, LWCF had to be reauthorized every few years but amid congressional gridlock the program was constantly at risk of expiring. This uncertainty placed conservation projects funded by LWCF in jeopardy. With permanent reauthorization we no longer have to worry about the program expiring.

Read more including “Free Access to Public Lands for All Fourth Graders and their Families” and “New Trail Extensions” here: <http://tinyurl.com/yxolw9ml>

*(From American Hiking Society website story)*

## **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 news publications: <http://www.americantrails.org/trailtracks/index.html>

### **TRAIL GUIDES**

- San Diego County park rangers recommend these trails in 2019: <http://tinyurl.com/ya5bhg7v>
- 10 winter hikes near Denver where you can try to avoid the snow: <http://tinyurl.com/y6kkb56t>
- Winter fat tire biking is taking off in Michigan, 17 trails to try: <http://tinyurl.com/y58mvw5q>

### **FUNDING**

- North Face Explore Fund grant (application open Feb 25-April 2): <http://tinyurl.com/hkdfzn3>
- Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. grants (ATV trail projects; due March 1, Sept 1): <http://tinyurl.com/zcz8u7a>
- Federal Highway Administration funding chart (has trails-related categories): <http://tinyurl.com/zqz2m8p>

### **VOLUNTEERING**

- American Hiking Society’s Volunteer Vacations: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh95kp8>
- Conservation Volunteers International volunteer trips: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/>

### **STUDIES**

- Can mountain biking make you happy?: <http://tinyurl.com/y2yaj7ag>
- Just 5 minutes in nature will increase happiness, study finds: <http://tinyurl.com/y26zea2d>

### **OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:**

- How About a New 4,000-Mile Bike Trail Route Across the US?: <http://tinyurl.com/y7vqn8gz>
- 2018 National Recreational Trail Photo Contest Winners Announced: <http://tinyurl.com/yxkyhhy9>
- So You Pooped on the Trail. What Now?: <http://tinyurl.com/y2chdp8k>

- 'One of my worst fears': Colorado trail runner who killed mountain lion describes his life-or-death fight: <http://tinyurl.com/y4symeuu>
- Hike the Hill 2019 Wraps Up with Passage of Public Lands Package: <http://tinyurl.com/y5xkqmdb>
- Register your National Trails Day Event now: [americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/host-information/](http://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/host-information/)

#### **INTERNATIONAL LINKS:**

- Our 5 Favourite Overnight Hiking Trails in the Western Cape (South Africa): <http://tinyurl.com/y8g8hjzb>
- 300km of new trails to create mountain bike magic for Ireland: <http://tinyurl.com/y2k2v6y3>

#### **SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL**

- 37 Awesome—and Awesomely Bad—Outdoor Movies: <http://tinyurl.com/y3t9ftmm>
- Escape Winter And Head To These Warmer National Forests: <http://tinyurl.com/y5un9dvz>
- Study Links Midlife Activity Levels to Future Dementia Risk: <http://tinyurl.com/yykx9zsl>
- Research Brief: The happiest mode of transportation? That would be cycling: <http://tinyurl.com/yydkm3mg>

Interior Trails Quarterly is a free email newsletter than 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.