

ACTION UPDATE

April 2018

FAIRBANKS AREA

TRAIL SHARING PROBLEMS, SUCCESSES HIGHLIGHTED IN REPORTS

Sharing the trails politely is always important, no matter the season or the area. Interior Alaska media has had some good and not-so-good reports regarding trail sharing recently. The not-so-good comes first.

In early March the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner ran two letters to the editor regarding someone on snowmachine using trails that have been groomed specifically for cross-country skiing. It's possible that the snowmachiners just didn't know that using the groomed trail would damage the trails for skiing. That's sometimes understandable. Some local trails are groomed for multi-use, including skiing, snowmaching, dog mushing, walking, etc. Others are groomed specifically for skiing, but don't necessarily have sufficient (or any) signage. When there is reasonable doubt, please stay off of groomed trails. And if you do groom trails for a specific use, please make sure to sign your trails so other users know.

Of course, grooming a trail for a specific use should always take into account the ability of other trail users to have reasonable access to trails in the area. That seems to be the case in the situations described by both letters, which were polite. You can read them here:

- Concerning ski trails on the Tanana River: <http://tinyurl.com/y97vn24b>
- No snowmachines on ski trails: <http://tinyurl.com/y96df38y>

The good news is next. The following post and reply were seen recently on the Facebook Goldstream Community page and are worthy of big thumbs up! (The specific trail wasn't mentioned.)

The original post:

To the super nice guy on a snowmachine with his two sons. I don't know if you're on this page, but. Thank you. We were out walking with our dogs, and instead of blasting past, you paused and alerted your other boy and went wide. We walk that trail every day, we keep it groomed so everyone can enjoy it, and it was SO nice to not be run over like what's happened in the past. People like you make Fairbanks an amazing place to live. This is why I will never move back to Anchorage. THANK YOU!!!

The response:

Hi! Thank You! My sons and I were just commenting on the amazing grooming when we saw you guys. The great thing about Northern trail use is the enjoyment of being out there and the folks you may see....! We all look out for each other ; and if we can try and make the trail better than when we left it! CHEERS!

UAF TRAIL GROOMERS HELP SMOOTH GOLDSTREAM VALLEY TRAIL

Trail groomers from the University of Alaska Fairbanks helped out trail users in the Goldstream Valley by using their trail grooming equipment to help cut down some bumps on one of the Goldstream Valley trails. The call for help started on the Goldstream Community Facebook page. Below is a thank you that appeared on the same page after the work was done:

Update #2:

I'd like to give a shout out to Jason and Burnley, with UAF North Campus, they brought the 'Sherpa' and a groomer out to Goldstream today, on their day off mind you, and groomed the main trail north of Goldstream to try and cut down the moguls. The groomer cut the tops off the moguls and filled the low spots to some extent, it is still bumpy but better than it was. They are members of this group, so I hope anyone else who appreciates their efforts will take this opportunity to thank them.

FAIRBANKS WINTER TRAILS CHALLENGE WRAPS UP IN APRIL

The Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge for 2017-18 wraps up on April 15. There is still time to take the challenge. 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!

- Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge Guide: <http://tinyurl.com/yckcg2st>
- Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge List 2017/18: <http://tinyurl.com/yc2yuobn>

LAKE TRAILS AT CHENA LAKE REC AREA NO LONGER GROOMED

Seen on Facebook > FNSB Parks and Rec (March 8):

Due to overflow issues on the lake at Chena Lake Recreation Area we will no longer be maintaining the lake trails. We will continue to groom all land trails until conditions no longer allow.

FAIRBANKS AREA LINKS

- Fairbanks Trail Users (new Facebook group):
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1654728164805164/>
- Parks and Rec, Trails Commission, other Fairbanks boards have openings:
<http://tinyurl.com/yb34fx9d>

INTERIORWIDE/STATEWIDE

SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

Please keep in mind how your trail activities might affect other trail users, especially in the spring.

As snow melts and the ground thaws, the trails become extremely muddy. Using really muddy trails at this time can result in ruts that stay all summer when the trails dry out. Those ruts can make the trails difficult to use all summer and into the next winter. They help create erosion by keeping water on the trails.

Early season damage of trails is a recurring problem. Many people are chomping at the bit to get outside once the snow melts. And some people love to get as muddy as they can while out on the trails. But with a little thought this problem can be greatly reduced.

- **Try to be patient.** Stay off the trails if you can. If you are unsure if a trail is ready to be used, check it out with the commitment to turn back if you are doing too much damage.
- **Choose low impact.** If you use the trails in several different ways, choose the method of travel that will cause the least amount of damage if you do run into some muddy sections.
- **Pick your trails carefully.** Use well-drained trails with lots of southern exposure. They typically dry out the quickest. If you just have to get muddy, please limit your activities to trails that are already thrashed. A little more damage probably won't make a big difference, but a trail in nice shape can be damaged for a season in a hurry.



An alternative to using trails in the spring is to get out on foot or by bike and go explore quiet subdivision roads new to you. You get to be outside, be active, and probably find out new things about your community.

(Constantine Khroulev photo of a badly rutted Trail Creek Trail in the White Mountains National Recreation Area north of Fairbanks.)

OUTDOOR EXPLORER HOSTING TRAIL TALES AUDIO FILES

Thanks to Eric Bork and Alaska Public Media, you can listen to some of the past storytellers from the Alaska Trails' Trail Tales events. Storytellers share seven-minute stories about their trail experiences, adventures and life in general. Click here to enjoy listening to fellow active and outdoorsy Alaskans: <http://tinyurl.com/yb59kfha>

CONFERENCE SPEAKER TO HIGHLIGHT VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT



Alaska Trails is please to announce the first Keynote Speaker for its 2018 Statewide Trails Conference: Steven Moore, trails volunteer manager.

Steven Moore was born and raised on Washington's beautiful Olympic Peninsula, Steven is no stranger to the importance of trails and wild places. His time spent in nature inspired him to pursue a career of environmental stewardship and artistic expression in the city of Seattle where he worked for the renowned Washington Trails Association (WTA), while also doing music part time. Steven worked as WTA's Volunteer Program Manager and oversaw years of growth in their robust volunteer trail maintenance program, which reached a milestone of over 5,000 volunteers and 160,000 hours of work in 2017.

The conference will be held April 26-28 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. For more information on the conference, including the agenda, see:

- Conference web page: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html>.
- Facebook Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/358363531293740/>

Throughout his time with WTA, Steven oversaw many technological and social advancements within the organization that helped WTA attract and retain new volunteers through their basic principles of safety, fun and work. With a mind for logistics and developing personal relationships Steven was a valuable asset to WTA during his employment there and is ready to continue sharing his passion for trails and art in Alaska and beyond.

(Check out Steven's music at: www.mossyraven.com)

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Grant applications for the state Snowmobile Trails Program are now available. Public notice for applications must be posted by June 10. Grant applications must be submitted or postmarked by July 1. This program, administered by the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use. The program also provides funds for snowmobile safety programs. Matching funds are not required for safety programs.

Grant funds are generated from annual registration fees paid to the state by snowmobile owners statewide. For more information on the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program and the Grooming Pool, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/q33aj9m>

For general grant questions regarding the program please contact the Grants Administrator (907/269-8709). For project development questions please contact the State Trails Coordinator (907/269- 8699). Or contact either one through the Department of Natural Resources email page (<http://tinyurl.com/3umsvj5>).

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY COMING UP THE FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE

National Trails Day is happening June 2, but as of the end of March there were just two events registered for Alaska: the Alaska Endurance Run in Fairbanks and the Horsetail Falls Trail improvement in Whittier. If you are interested in leading or organizing an event, visit www.nationaltrailsday.org for information on how to host an event and where to register an event. National Trails Day is the country's largest celebration of trails. Events will take place in every state across the country and will include hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more.

SCA SEEKING CREWMEMBERS FOR TRAIL, CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Trailblazers wanted for the Student Conservation Association (SCA), which is recruiting students age 15-19 for summer trail/environmental restoration projects. Students from all over Alaska convene to camp out, build trails, cookout, and share work skills and life skills. Teams of eight crewmembers are



supervised by two adult crew leaders. In addition to community service hours, school credit, and skill-sharing, students get a \$250 or \$500 stipend at the successful completion of their two- or four-weeks of service. Outdoor gear, food, and transportation (if needed) are all provided. To apply, students must visit www.thesca.org/akcrew and complete the Basic, Program (Regional/National Crew), and Final application. The deadline to apply is April 11. Candidates do not need to pay the \$25 application fee. Enter application code PO-00724993 for a fee waiver. Candidates must meet eligibility requirements and be available for entire duration of at least one crew to be considered. Contact Alaska recruiter Jeff Chen at jchen@thesca.org if you have any questions or when you complete an application.

(From What's Up? by Peg Tileston; photo from the Student Conservation Association website)

RESPECT MOOSE WHEN OUT ON THE TRAILS

While you are out and about in the parks and on the trails, please be mindful and aware of moose. While they most often mind their own business, they are wild animals and can be unpredictably aggressive. Check out the ADF&G page on Aggressive Moose for more information: <http://tinyurl.com/y7cvabvh>

(From Alaska State Parks Facebook page)

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

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

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Chena River SRA: Trailhead Improvements (bids due April 3):
<http://notice.alaska.gov/189130>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Eagle Watch (state parks newsletter):
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatcharchive>
- Nationwide gun sales net major funding for Alaska wildlife conservation projects (some Pittman-Robertson funding goes toward trail and trailhead development):
<http://tinyurl.com/y88ror7z>

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- 10 Trails Named After Influential Women (one is the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail):
<http://tinyurl.com/me34s53>
- Summary of Matanuska Greenbelt Trails meeting Feb 21: <http://tinyurl.com/yagk3pkp>
- Marketing Anchorage as a snow biking, bike packing, and hut-to-hut trip destination:
<http://tinyurl.com/yao7dzb4>
- The Alaska Department of Natural Resources is considering whether it should revise its regulations regarding using or discharging firearms in a small portion of the Hatcher Pass Special Use Area to allow for a possible biathlon range (comments due by April 16):
<http://tinyurl.com/y9x6oko4>

SOUTHEAST LINK

- (Sitka) Cross Trail \$20,000 from fundraising finish line: <http://tinyurl.com/y7yjojd4>

WESTERN LINK

- (Nelson Island) Alaska Tribe Receives \$10M in Federal Funds for Trails:
<http://tinyurl.com/y9a8gbmb>

NORTHERN LINK

- Notice of Intent: Selawik Pedestrian Footbridge Rehabilitation Project:
<http://notice.alaska.gov/189366>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Avalanches are constant threats to adventurers: <http://tinyurl.com/ybuen5w4>
- Kick the kids out of the house for playtime, and then join them: <http://tinyurl.com/yd8mz3ad>
- Gov. Walker Proclaims June Great Outdoors Month: <http://tinyurl.com/ycfm5ova>
- Alaska's ice fields and ice caves are worth exploring — but do so cautiously: <http://tinyurl.com/y78v8ubo>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show
 - Outdoor activity and the human brain: <http://tinyurl.com/y96ugbtz>
 - Snow machine assisted skiing (segment #1) and “Trail meeting with archery group while missing two front teeth”. Lee Bolling, at a Trail Tales event (segment #4): <http://tinyurl.com/ycbocxza>
 - Revisiting being alone in the wilderness: <http://tinyurl.com/yb5fsdd2>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

STUDY SHOWS RISKS OF DEATH FROM PREDATORS REMAINS LOW

People who are scared of or nervous about bears or other predators while recreating in the backcountry should consider the statistics. This story about a new study released in the latest issue of *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine* should help keep things in perspective. Here's an excerpt:

"Importantly, most deaths are not actually due to wild animals like mountain lions, wolves, bears, sharks, etc., but are a result of deadly encounters with farm animals, anaphylaxis from bees, wasps, or hornet stings, and dog attacks. So, while it is important that people recreating in the wilderness know what to do when they encounter a potentially dangerous animal, the actual risk of death is quite low."

Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2018-02-people-animals-year-unchanged.html#jCp>

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

TRAIL GUIDES

- 15 great running trails around Denver and Boulder for veterans and newbies alike: <http://tinyurl.com/y96w4kc4>

ADVOCACY/VOLUNTEER

- Coalition for Recreational Trails Annual Achievement Awards (nominations due April 6): <http://www.americantrails.org/awards/CRTawards.html>

FUNDING

- Record Fund to Help IMBA Create 100 New MTB Trails in 2018: <http://tinyurl.com/ydxont7n>
- Tiger Grants Announced (for more on Alaska award mentioned see Southeast News and Notices): <http://tinyurl.com/yavtt5d2>
- National Forest Trail Stewardship funding (deadline April 15): <http://tinyurl.com/ya3qpqn6>
- Federal Highway Administration funding chart (has trails-related categories): <http://tinyurl.com/zqz2m8p>

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- For the latest American Trails news publications: <http://www.americantrails.org/trailtracks/index.html>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Top Five Famous Trails in the U.S.: <http://tinyurl.com/yads8pob>
- Five Ways To Add Challenge To OHV Trail Systems (fourth story): <http://tinyurl.com/y7blnqn9>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Feral cattle terrorize hikers and devour native plants in a California national monument: <http://tinyurl.com/yabvzvhy>
- 9 Tips For Better Wellbeing While Backpacking: <http://tinyurl.com/yansm7ch>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- 5 trails to tempt you to go mountain bike riding in South Africa: <http://tinyurl.com/y7froxug>

Interior Trails Quarterly is a free email newsletter that 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. Note: submissions may 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.