

INTERIOR TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

June 2020

PLEDGE REPLACES EVENTS ON TRAILS DAY DURING COVID-19

TAKE THE PLEDGE The following message was recently published on the National Trails Day page:

Celebrate by taking the #NationalTrailsDay Pledge

Take the Pledge, Promote National Trails Day

Together we can take action to preserve trails and fight for equitable access to quality green space, even from within quarantine.

We've temporarily experienced life with limited access to trails and public lands and, now more than ever, realize how much we need them.

Take American Hiking Society's #NationalTrailsDay Pledge and commit to taking at least one action in 2020 to preserve trails and fight for equitable access to quality green space.

American Hiking Society will provide easy actions you can take. Once it's safe to get outside in groups again, we'll also share ways to get involved with local trail service projects.



PEEDE AREA TRAILS GET CLOSER TO GETTING PROTECTION

Cam Webb, organizer of the "Keep Peede Trails Public" campaign, sent out this email in mid-May.

The Planning Commission just voted 7-to-0 in favor of the rezone of the Peede Tract to Outdoor Recreation. This is a huge step towards preserving public access to this particular tract, and perhaps to more land around it. Thanks for your emails to the Commission, and thanks to those who testified via Zoom just now. And of course, thanks to the Planning Commission members!

The final stage is the Assembly vote on the rezoning Ordinance. I'll let you know more when we find out when that is, and if there might be any challenges - we may need one more effort of public support on this.

To find out more about this effort see: <https://peedetrails4all.org/>

WATCH FOR BEARS, MOOSE CALVES WHEN OUT ON THE TRAILS

It's calving season for the moose again and things can get dangerous really fast when you surprise a moose or get too close and the mama decides it's time to protect her young. And, of course, bears are out of hibernation and active. To learn how to avoid surprising animals and deal with uncomfortable or dangerous situations, check out these resources:

- <http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/Wildlife.aspx>
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livewith.moose>

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)

ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILER READY FOR PROJECTS



ORGANIZE A PROJECT As you start planning trail building and maintenance projects, 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).

WATCH FOR BIRD NESTS WHEN WORKING ON TRAILS

Trail work sometimes requires downing trees or clearing shrubs. When doing so make sure not to violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which makes it illegal for anyone to “take” migratory birds, their eggs, feathers, or nests. “Take” includes destroying or damaging active bird nests or eggs. Different areas of the state have different sensitive periods generally occurring between April 15 and July 25. However, if you encounter an active nest at any time leave it in place and protected until young hatch and depart. “Active” is indicated by intact eggs, live chicks, or the presence of an adult on the nest.

For more information and recommended time periods for avoiding vegetation clearing see: <https://tinyurl.com/y9ulmffg>

SEEN RECENTLY ON THE INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

May 20: **Alaska State Parks NORTHERN Region update**

Good things are happening! The multi-use trailheads in the Chena River State Recreation Area are open for the season starting Thursday May 21, 2020. This includes Compeau, Stiles, and Upper Chena Dome.

Big thanks to our ASP Rangers for working hard to get the parks open across the state.



INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Trust works to save trails across the (Fairbanks) borough: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ng9bq4>
- Paddle and Pedal Outings in the Interior: <https://tinyurl.com/y857wryg>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Pet Owners Be Aware: Tularemia Suspected in Hares in Interior Alaska: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxcxsgs>
- Satisfying Curiosity in the Donnelly Training Area: <https://tinyurl.com/yafa7zkg>
- Mount Margaret on Mother's Day: <https://tinyurl.com/yb7r4l15>

STATEWIDE

STATE, FEDERAL AGENCIES CREATE UNIFIED SAFETY MESSAGE

Alaska State Parks worked with National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service on the Kenai Peninsula to come up with one cohesive message for a safe and fun summer for Alaska. We need that.

These posters will be put up around our public lands across the state over the next few weeks but as you prepare for having fun outdoors, please keep these points in mind and plan accordingly.

Thanks Alaska- SUMMER IS HERE!

STAY SAFE ALASKA!
ENJOY YOUR PUBLIC LANDS AND HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Feeling under the weather? Please visit later- your adventure will still be here when you're feeling better!

Give everyone space. Keep a minimum of 6 feet distance and respect others' social bubbles.

Avoid crowds and keep gatherings small. Check current guidelines prior to arrival.

Wash your hands often. Use warm, soapy water for 20 seconds or hand sanitizer as a backup.

Help Alaska's wildland firefighters during this pandemic. Attend your campfires and put them out entirely!

Follow COVID-19 CDC guidance and State of Alaska health mandates.
[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
FOREST SERVICE
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
ALASKA STATE PARKS

ALLIANCE OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE DRIVE GATHERS STEAM

HELP THE ALLIANCE The following story was recently published in the Alaska Outdoor Alliance online newsletter. See the full newsletter at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7zc9hfz>

From Ketchikan to Fairbanks, elected officials, outdoor businesses, civic leaders and enthusiast groups - from biathletes to mountain bikers, snow machiners, hikers, skiers, dog mushers and others - are getting behind Alaska Outdoor Alliance's request for jobs to get Alaskans back to work this summer.

The outpouring of support continues. Last week, 11 state legislators sent letters of support to Alaska's Congressional delegation: Representatives Matt Claman, Sara Hannan, Andy Josephson, Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Dan Ortiz, Andi Story, Geran Tarr, and Chris Tuck, plus

Senators Mia Costello, Elvi Gray-Jackson and Jesse Kiehl. City and Borough of Juneau Assembly and Mayor Beth Weldon sent their own letter to the delegation. Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz and Assemblymen John Weddleton and Forrest Dunbar also got behind the request as did the City of Delta Junction. Other organizations of note include: Tourism Management Best Practices, Sitka Chamber of Commerce; Kodiak Area Native Association and Alaska Chapter - American Society of Landscape Architects.

One of the strongest comments of support came from Bill Popp, President and CEO of Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), who wrote: "AEDC supports this effort and encourages Congress and the President to provide funding for these shovel-ready projects that will help put Alaskans to work!"

WHAT'S NEXT: Last week we spoke with DC staff for each of our Congressional leaders and they asked for real stories about job loss and how streamlining hiring processes and accelerating funding for local, state, federal and tribal shovel-ready projects would benefit individuals, families and businesses.

Please submit your story via this easy and quick Workforce Impact Story Form or email us directly if you'd prefer to discuss.



ALASKA STATE PARKS STAY OPEN WITH GUIDELINES AMID PANDEMIC

The following letter was recently published on the Alaska State Parks website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/>

Dear Alaska State Park Users,

Alaska State Parks are open so Alaskans can get outdoors and spend time in nature to get fresh air and exercise. Regional headquarters in each area are open by appointment and you can make an appointment by calling the regional headquarters office in your area.

As always, we have the safety and well-being of our visitors and staff in mind. Alaska State Parks is operating campgrounds according to our division COVID Plan. This plan includes a guidance document and Alaska COVID 19 Health Mandates:

- *State of Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-mandates/>*
- *THE MOST CURRENT ALASKA COVID-19 INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>.*

While we encourage park visits, we do ask that if you are sick and/or experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 that you please refrain from visiting. Visitors to our parks are encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines at all times by keeping a distance of 6 feet or more between you and others. By visiting Alaska State Parks, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

We are committed to keeping our public use cabins open throughout Alaska. The public use cabins do not pose a distinct public health threat, but do note that the cabins are not sanitized on a regular schedule do to the remoteness of their locations. The public is advised to follow guidance by keeping group sizes small and bringing supplies to wipe down surfaces before and after use; this will help us keep them open for everyone to enjoy. To check cabin availability, go to our cabin page: each cabin has a direct link to the Reserve America booking window. Stay safe and get outside!

*Sincerely,
Alaska State Parks*

ALASKA STATEWIDE TRAILS INITIATIVE SEEKS TO BRING JOBS TO ALASKA

Did you know more than one in ten Alaskan jobs is tied to tourism and outdoor recreation spending?

People and communities across Alaska recognize that outdoor recreation supports health, contributes to a high quality of life and—perhaps most importantly—drives spending that supports business, creates jobs and generates tax revenue that pays for schools and other public services. That's why the Alaska Trails Initiative is busy looking to the future and working hard to ensure we take full advantage of

our State's phenomenal outdoor recreation resources. A coalition of trails organizations from around the state, the ATI collaborates with leaders in government, business, the health industry, and the non-profit sector to invest more in the trails we love.

Investing in outdoor infrastructure attracts employers, residents, retirees, and skilled workforce, ensuring communities thrive economically and socially. Smart investments can further grow this dynamic sector; good planning will make sure we grow while maintaining the quality of our natural settings and



communities. Will you join us in building toward a future that invests in our outdoor infrastructure and Alaska's trails?

DONATE Invest in the future of Alaska's trails: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/donate>

Learn more about the Alaska Trails Initiative: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative>

SEVERAL TRAIL-RELATED POSITIONS AVAILABLE ACROSS STATE

APPLY Alaska State Parks is looking for seasonal employees and volunteers whose duties often include trail work or oversight. Please note that opportunities are dependent on pandemic conditions.

- For more info 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>

SEEN RECENTLY ON THE STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA STATE PARKS

DO YOUR PART May 28: We live in an amazing state with public lands that are unparalleled in beauty and access, readily available within a quick drive for most Alaskans.

Whether you believe it is a right or a privilege to access our public lands, it's everyone's responsibility to help with the DOing:

DO: Be a responsible user of our lands.

DO: Pack out what you pack in.

DO: Stay positive and allow the outdoors to be your energy, your refuge, your recharge.

DO: Respect the people around you.

DO: Be kind... to the land, to yourself, to those managing the Parks.

While most of our Alaska State Parks campgrounds ARE open, some are not, due to reasons beyond our control. If you choose to camp at one of these places, it is imperative that you take out EVERYTHING you take in with you. Anything you do leave will add to the time we can open.

Your cooperation and Alaskan spirit is appreciated. We do hope you are out there enjoying the lands and getting what you need to recharge... responsibly.

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/open.htm>

MORE DETAILED STATEWIDE TRAIL NEWS IN ALASKA TRAILS NEWSLETTER



Most of the news in the Interior Trails Newsletter is also included in the monthly Alaska Trails newsletter, a statewide newsletter put out by the group Alaska Trails. The Alaska Trails newsletter also has news from other regions of Alaska, including Southcentral and Southeast. If you are interested in getting the Alaska Trails newsletter, which is also free, send an email to office.alaskatrails@gmail.com. Please include "Request Alaska Trails newsletter" in the subject line. Eric Troyer, editor and publisher of the ITN, is also the editor of the Alaska Trails newsletter.

STATEWIDE LINKS

- **APPLY** Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) Recruiting New Members, deadline to apply June 5: <http://notice.alaska.gov/197487>

PANDEMIC-RELATED LINKS

- Spring weather pulls Alaskans outside, but virus precautions still in play: <https://tinyurl.com/y85w8fj9>
- Alaska kids spend less time exercising, more on screens during pandemic: <https://tinyurl.com/y73fleoc>

BEARS AND SUCH

- As COVID-19 restrictions send more Alaskans outside, Fish and Game warns about bears: <https://tinyurl.com/yagwogp5>
- Moose attacks Eagle River woman and her dog, Fish and Game says: <https://tinyurl.com/y734pvag>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Changes at Denali National Park
 - The Denali Highway Is Now Open for Public Travel: <https://tinyurl.com/ybaxhr3s>
 - Denali National Park to open summer season July 1: <https://tinyurl.com/ydgtq99q>
 - Private vehicles to be allowed on Denali road: <https://tinyurl.com/yara4nmw>
- **ATTEND** The 2020 Alaska Walk, Bike Conference goes virtual and free: <https://tinyurl.com/ycvvp55n>
- This invasive plant is ruining some Alaska water bodies: <https://tinyurl.com/yc23mnw2>
- Alaska State Troopers warn of hiking danger citing recent death: <https://tinyurl.com/yb7gvnx8>
- Through Our Eyes: Artistic Visions of Our State Parks (open for submissions): <https://tinyurl.com/y8am3usr>
- Bureau of Land Management opens all summer recreation sites: <https://tinyurl.com/y8kbort9>
- **ENTER** Alaska State Parks 50th Anniversary Photo Contest (run **monthly**): <https://tinyurl.com/qnssp93>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM NEEDS LETTERS OF SUPPORT

SEND A LETTER American Trails' partners always answer the call and we need your help once again! The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) faces a crucial time as the program is at risk of going dormant without Congressional approval before September 30th.

This sample letter of support (<https://tinyurl.com/yc4chym>), addressed to relevant committee leaders, requests "...that HR 5797, "The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Full Funding Act of 2020" sponsored by Congressman Welch of VT and Congressman Curtis of UT be included in the transportation reauthorization bill..."

Please use the language from the letter, modify it to address your specific needs, and put it on your organizational letterhead. It is important to note that while individual letters to Congress are valuable, this effort is primarily focused on getting our partner associations, clubs, and organizations to send organizational letters of support. If you have the authority to send the letters on your organization's letterhead, please do so. If you need to consult the board of directors or go through some other process before the letter can be signed and sent, please start that process ASAP.

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT) and partners with a Washington, D.C. presence are currently advocating for the continuation of RTP and these letters will be used to support those efforts.

If you send a letter, please email it to the following House of Representatives staff and the leadership at the CRT:

helena.zyblikewycz@mail.house.gov; Alex.Piper@mail.house.gov; jackie.schmitz@mail.house.gov;
Jake.Bornstein@mail.house.gov michael.falencki@mail.house.gov; cheryle.tucker@mail.house.gov;
CRTleadership@rectrails.org

SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED FOR OUTDOOR PROFESSIONALS

APPLY The application period for the Christopher K. Jarvi Scholarship to Advance Partnerships will **open May 1 and close on July 31**.

This scholarship was created to help dedicated professionals explore ways to enrich existing and integrate more partnerships into their work to benefit and bring value to parks, public lands and the communities that host them.

Learning about partnerships and developing skills is an iterative process. The more one learns and practices, the greater the innovation and partner engagement in all aspects of recreation and parks. The concept and practice of partnering will change as the needs of parks and recreation professionals evolve. This scholarship encourages applications to take the practice of partnerships to the next level.

To learn more about the scholarship, including eligibility and expectations of the applicants, see: <https://www.recpro.org/christopher-k-jarvi-scholarship>

(From the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals website)

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

TRAILS AND THE PANDEMIC

- Recreate Responsibly publicity toolkit: <https://tinyurl.com/ya25g2fe>
- How COVID-19 is Affecting the Trails Community: <https://tinyurl.com/y9kt44q4>
- Land Managers are Getting Nervous About Unauthorized Trail Modifications During Lockdown: <https://tinyurl.com/y8vt6sz8>
- How the Pandemic Splintered the Appalachian Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/y9ac4v6o>

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 "Trail Tracks": www.americantrails.org/communications/newsletter
- Conservation Volunteers International Program (May): <https://tinyurl.com/yc327wcs>

ADVOCACY

- Tell Your Senators to Support the Great American Outdoors Act: <https://tinyurl.com/y653vuo2>

VOLUNTEER

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

FUNDING

- National Forest Foundation's Matching Awards Program (ddline June 9): <https://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- Submit Your Trail Infrastructure Projects for CARES Act Funding: <https://tinyurl.com/y8zwxwhl>

TRAILS AND HEALTH

- The Healing Power Of Nature: <https://tinyurl.com/y952gr4y>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Wheels to Water: Inclusive Recreation on the Saluda River (S. Carolina): <https://tinyurl.com/yaghnzeu>
- Electronic OHV Mapping Applications: <https://tinyurl.com/y7yjh4p>
- Colorado's Singletrack Wars: <https://tinyurl.com/y7g5p87s>
- A Paddler's Guide to Leaving No Trace: <https://tinyurl.com/ybtbjzx8>
- Tips for handling harassment on the trail: <https://tinyurl.com/ybmjtw87>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Work Starts In Netherlands On 1,000-Meter Bat-Friendly Bicycling Bridge: <https://tinyurl.com/yded5964>

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.