

INTERIOR TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

MAY 2023

FAIRBANKS BOROUGH LOOKING FOR NEW TRAIL COORDINATOR

Want to support trails in the Fairbanks Borough in a big way? Consider applying for the Fairbanks Trail Coordinator position. Bryant Wright recently left the position, and the Parks and Recreation Department is looking for candidates. Look at the job posting and see if you have the minimum qualifications. Wright did a great job while in the position, so you've got a good foundation to work from.



Fairbanks Trails Coordinator job posting: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8tzejv>

To see what sorts of things are possible while in this position, read this article about Wright's time in the position: <https://tinyurl.com/hn3538ra>

Bryant Wright photo: Wright started the popular winter and summer trails challenges.

ADVOCATES SHOULD REMIND MAYOR, ASSEMBLY OF TRAIL BENEFITS

COMMENT Fairbanks Borough Mayor Bryce Ward has presented his administration's budget. Soon, citizens will have an opportunity to comment to the Borough Assembly. This is a good time to speak up about trails (and anything else you think is important).

Below is a budget timeline as well as some resources about understanding the budget and budgeting process and how to contact our local representatives. Remember to remind the mayor and assembly that trails bring many benefits that we sometimes take for granted, such as:

- Providing access to natural resources, such as game, berries, and the great outdoors.
- Improving the physical, mental, and social health of our citizens by helping to get people exercising outdoors, alone and with other people.
- Increasing tourism by providing a place for events, such as the North American Sled Dog Championships, the Yukon Quest, the Sonot Kkaazoot ski marathon, and the White Mountains 100, Chena River to Ridge, and Tanana River Challenge multisport races.
- Giving locals and visitors access to the wild expanse of Alaska.
- Encouraging human-powered transportation, improving health and reducing car traffic.



TIMELINE

- April 4: Mayor Ward gives his "State of the Borough" address
- April 6-22: Several Assembly Finance Committee worksessions on the budget
- May 4: **Assembly holds a public hearing for the proposed budget**
- May 11: Reconvened Assembly meeting (if not finished May 4; another opportunity to comment)
- June 8: Assembly sets the property tax mill rates

LINKS TO INTERIOR TRAIL INFORMATION

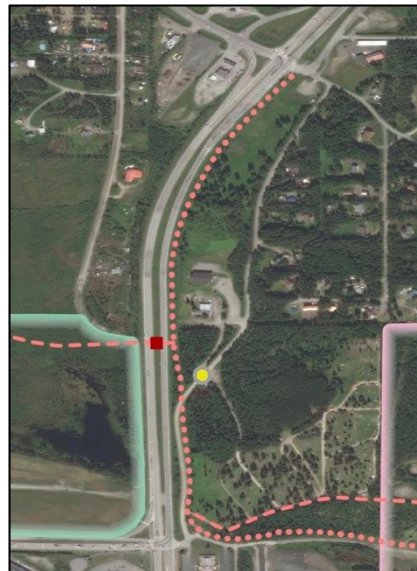
- List of apps that have many interior Alaska trails: www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/web-sites/
- Interior Alaska Trails (a collection of trail-related resources): www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/. (If you find any broken links or other problems please send an email to fbxtrails@gmail.com)

RESOURCES

- Borough Budget page: <https://fnsb.gov/896/Budget>
- Borough Assembly page (including contact info): <https://fnsb.gov/171/Borough-Assembly>
- Borough Mayor's office: <https://fnsb.gov/224/Mayors-Office>

FAIRBANKS BORO ASSEMBLY SUPPORTS STEESE TRAIL TUNNEL

At a late April meeting, the Fairbanks Borough Assembly unanimously passed a resolution in favor of the Steese Expressway/Johansen Expressway Interchange Project including the Steese Expressway trail tunnel. Through the resolution, and using the "strongest legal language that the Borough Attorney would let them insert," the Assembly has let the Department of Transportation know that the borough wants the tunnel included, according to trails volunteer Bruce Jamieson.



Also, the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce recently passed a unanimous resolution of support for the trail tunnel, Jamieson said.

These are steps in a long journey. More needs to be worked out, including funding sources, but the project is moving forward. Thank you to everyone who expressed their support for the project to the Assembly. Your voice was loud, and it was heard.

For more information on this project, there are a couple of posts about it on the Interior Alaska Trails website:

<https://www.interioralaskatrails.org/>

Advocates are asking supporters of the project to thank the Assembly for letting DOT know the borough residents strongly support this project. Contact the Assembly here: <https://fnsb.gov/Directory.aspx?DID=64>

Graphic: Red square shows approximate location of tunnel and possible trail connections. Steese-Johansen intersection is at the bottom, Steese-Farmer's Loop intersection is at the top.

LAND TRUST TO HOLD MEETING ABOUT TRAILHEAD PROPOSAL

The Interior Alaska Land Trust will be holding a public meeting on May 20 regarding a trailhead proposal off Farmer's Loop Road.

The meeting will be held Saturday, May 20, from 1 to 3pm at Mushers Hall, 935 Farmers Loop Road. The trust is considering building a trailhead off Farmer's Loop Road near its intersection with Midnight Sun Street. The trailhead would access the trail network in Creamer's Field Migratory Wildlife Refuge, also known as the ADMA trails.

For more information call 907-699-2281.



Graphic: Green area shows approximate location of proposed trailhead.

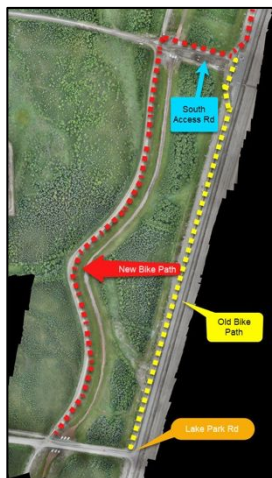
OPEN HOUSE ON YANKOVICH/MILLER HILL ROAD PROJECT

An open house on the Yankovich Road/Miller Hill Road Reconstruction and Multi Use Path project will be held on Wednesday, May 3 at 5:30 p.m. at UAF U-Park Building, 1000 University Ave, Rm 156. The goal of this project is to make Yankovich and Miller Hill roads safer for all users.

Learn more about the open house and project here: <https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/yankovich-miller/>

PATH NEAR CHENA LAKE REC AREA TEMPORARILY REROUTED

A recreational pedestrian and bicycle path will be rerouted temporarily beginning April 26 at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project in North Pole.



The reroute is next to the Chena Lake Recreation Area.

Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Alaska District is preparing for the summer construction season with a focus on continuing work on the Moose Creek Dam Modification Project. A key component of this effort is to establish a concrete batch plant just north of Lake Park Road.

Due to the increased construction activity in this area, the bike path will be redirected from Lake Park Road to the South Access Road. The alternate route will ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. Meanwhile, motorists are likely to encounter flaggers north of Lake Park Road.

“We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding as we resume construction,” said Justin Kerwin, senior park ranger for the Chena Project. “Our priority is to make improvements to the dam, but we still want to support our recreational users.”

To read more about the project see: <https://tinyurl.com/rcs87pv7>

From US Army Corps of Engineers press release

SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

TREAD LIGHTLY 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 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.

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.
- **Help them drain.** Sometimes just a well-placed boot heel can drain ponded water off a trail. Even more permanent drainage can be provided with a shovel, Pulaski or McLeod. Getting ponded water off the trail helps them dry out.



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. Check this article for other ideas: <https://tinyurl.com/yr24rmww>

Photo: Erosion on Ester Dome Singletrack Trails

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY EVENT REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

REGISTER Join us on June 3, 2023, for National Trails Day. Connect with more people in your area who share your love of being outside.

Each year, National Trails Day reaches millions of people through advertising, social media, and word of mouth. Registering an event on the official National Trails Day event site is a great opportunity to connect to new and existing trail users in your community who are looking for outdoor events.

Register your event here: <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/host-information/>

ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILER READY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS

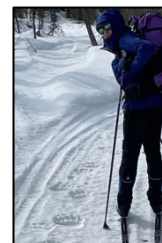


As you start planning trail building and maintenance projects, remember that Alaska Trails has a mobile tool cache available in the Fairbanks area to loan to organized trail groups in the Interior. The trailers were upgraded recently and have many trail tools including mcleods, Pulaskis, rakes, gloves, and much, much more. If you would like to borrow one of the caches, please contact Geoffrey Orth (gcorth@straydogs.us).

WATCH FOR BEARS, MOOSE CALVES WHEN OUT ON THE TRAILS

It's calving season for the moose 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:

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



Also, check out this Alaska Science Forum column on early rising bears: <https://tinyurl.com/3sz8nybt>

Ned Rozell photo: Bear tracks on a trail in the Chena River State Recreation Area

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: www.fws.gov/alaska-bird-nesting-season

Photo from Denali 101: www.denali101.com/denalinationalpark/birds_of_denali.html

HELP SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE: FIX YOUR GEAR, PATAGONIA ACTION

Climate change affects everyone, including trail lovers.

For winter trail lovers, a warming climate can mean shorter snow seasons, and more extreme events like snow droughts and rain-on-snow events. For summer trail lovers, climate change can bring more droughts, wildfires, flooding, and permafrost thawing, all of which can hurt trails and the lands through which they run. These impacts will just get worse unless we slow climate change, which means we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change may seem like an overwhelming problem, but we humans created it one step at a time, and we can solve it that way, too. Let's do what we can to ensure that future winters still have usable snow for us and for our children, grandchildren, and beyond.

Here are some things you can do right now to help make a difference.

Use Patagonia Action Works



For almost 40 years, Patagonia has supported grassroots activists working to find solutions to the environmental crisis. But in this time of unprecedented threats, it's often hard to know the best way to get involved. Patagonia Action Works connects individuals with environmental organizations, to take action on the most pressing issues facing the world today.

<https://www.patagonia.com/actionworks/home/choose-location/>

Take a personal action

Fix or patch your outdoor (and other) gear rather than buying new. Eventually, gear must be replaced, but see how long you can make what you have last. If treated properly, good gear can last a long time. Or consider buying used. Fewer things being manufactured, means less energy being used to make them. It also means fewer things ending up in the garbage. Here are some resources:

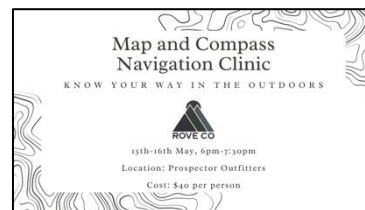
- To fix your gear: <https://www.ifixit.com/>
- How to Repair Your Outdoor Gear: <https://www.adventureprotocol.com/repairing-outdoor-gear/>
- 8 Tips for Fixing Your Gear: <https://www.gearaid.com/blogs/learn/8-tips-for-fixing-your-gear-on-the-go>
- Repair Your Camping Gear: <https://backpackers.com/outdoor-guides/how-to-repair-camping-gear/>
- Buy Used Gear: 5 Best Sites to Shop: <https://gearjunkie.com/news/where-to-buy-used-outdoor-gear>
- Where To Buy Used Outdoor Gear: <https://www.theplanetedit.com/used-outdoor-gear/>
- Used Outdoor Gear: <https://www.thecoolist.com/used-outdoor-gear-stores/>



SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

EVENT BY ROVE CO

May 15th and 16th 2023 from 6-7:30 pm, we are partnering with Prospector Outfitters to host a two-day course where you will learn the basics of how to navigate with a map and compass. No electronics necessary! You will learn how to read a topographic map, how to orient your map using a compass, how to take compass bearings and translate them to a map, and how to follow a compass bearing. Absolutely no experience required! Course materials will be provided by the instructor. Recommended to bring note taking material.



Cost of course is \$40 for both days and can be purchased at: <https://rovecooutdoors.com/.../map-and-compass-navigation...>

There are only 12 spots for this course. Please note that this class is only offered in person and in Fairbanks.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/243943658034329/>

ALASKA STATE PARKS

April 25: ****Northern Region alert****

All trails in the Chena River State Recreation Area will be CLOSED TO MOTORIZED USE from April 30th-May 26th. This is to allow the trails to dry out and minimize negative impacts to the resource.

Trails remain OPEN to human powered traffic (Foot, Ski, Snowshoe, etc.). Please plan accordingly as you will not be allowed to use motorized transportation to access public use cabins from April 30th-May 26th.

Thank you!



FAIRBANKS CYCLE CLUB

An open house on the Yankovich Road/Miller Hill Road Reconstruction and Multi Use Path project will be held on Wednesday, May 3 at 5:30 p.m. at UAF U-Park Building, 1000 University Ave, Rm 156. The goal of this project is to make Yankovich and Miller Hill roads safer for all users.

Learn more about the open house and project here: <https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/yankovich-miller/>

BLM-WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

April 20: ❄️ Trail Conditions Report ❄️



Winter is almost over in the White Mountains and the trail crew swept through the cabins this week to clean out accumulated trash/food, change out fire extinguishers and assess maintenance needs. From the Wickersham Dome Trailhead they went out the Trail Creek Trail to work on Lee's, Moose, Creek, Crowberry and Cache Mountain cabins. Then they went out the Wickersham Creek and Fossil Creek Trails to work on Borealis, Caribou Bluff and Windy Gap cabins.

👉 Read the detailed trail report here: www.blm.gov/visit/white-mountains/trail-update

The BLM's winter travel limitations end April 30, when we switch to the new summer travel limitations approved in October. To help visitors navigate the motor vehicle limitations, we made a new summer recreation georeferenced PDF map for the White Mountains.

👉 Check out the new map here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9rwzaky>

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

April 12: The Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District has an online trail guide that includes trails in the Salcha-Delta area, toward Tok, and a couple on the Denali Highway. I just recently found out they have book version. It is available at the district office in Delta Junction at Alaska Highway milepost 1420.5 in the Jarvis Building (second floor of the same building where the DMV/Troopers are),

office number 219. The books are available for \$15 each, and acceptable payment is either check or cash.

You can see the online version here: <https://www.salchadeltaswcd.org/trails/>

DELTA JUNCTION TRAILS ASSOCIATION

April 2: That's a wrap on this year's Winter Trails Challenge! Darren Bruning, Tracy Dunham, and Ellie Mason squeaked in just under the wire and finished since the last update - congrats! We had 49 folks sign up and 19 people finish.

Donnelly Flats trail (#3) was the hardest and 18 people found the sign for that one. Town Trails (#6) wasn't too difficult, but there are no signs at the trailhead and it is not as well known. Only 18 people found that one. Next was Bluff Cabin Trail (#4) with 22, Bluff Point (#5) with 24, and the Liewer and River Walk Park Trails were tied with 28. 12 people chose to substitute or add a 7th by picking their own trail.

It's encouraging to see so many people out and about in the winter! Let's plan on doing this again next year. Comment below for which trails you would like to see included and any other feedback you want to give.



INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- The Quintessential White Mountain Experience (fatbike): <https://tinyurl.com/45942n6m>
- A Tale of Two Trails: Same Trail, Different Days (fatbike): <https://tinyurl.com/mr46aae9>

STATEWIDE

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR ALASKA LONG TRAIL IN THE STATE BUDGET

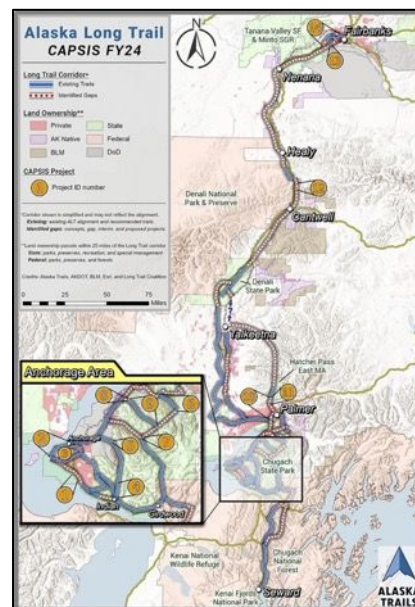
ADVOCATE Alaska Trails and our partners have recently submitted 14 Alaska Long Trail projects into FY24 state capital budget, totaling \$9.5 million. These projects will fill key shovel-ready and planning-ready gaps in the section between Anchorage and Fairbanks. The 14 projects include:

- Building new non-motorized trails
- Existing multi-use trail improvements
- Planning studies to identify links between segments
- Improving trail access and parking
- Wayfinding and cultural heritage
- Separated highway paths for safe non-motorized travel

You can find more information, including the specific projects here:

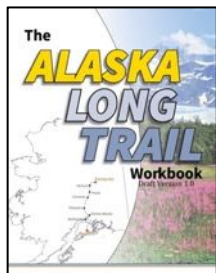
<https://tinyurl.com/97e6zmfc>

Please consider supporting some or all these projects by writing letters to your state legislators: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/long-trail-support>



PHOTOS, INPUT NEEDED FOR ALASKA LONG TRAIL WORKBOOK

SEND PHOTOS Interested in the Alaska Long Trail route details? A draft of the Alaska Long Trail



Workbook has been put together and is now available for you to peruse! This living document is a compilation of proposed routes that identifies existing trails, potential issues and areas of trail that need work, gaps in the route, and analyzes routes to determine their “time of completion” and difficulty:

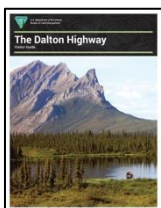
<https://www.alaska-trails.org/workbook-draft>

The workbook is still a working draft, and we would appreciate your help in making it more complete! Do you have high resolution photographs you'd be willing to share from portions of the Alaska Long Trail route? Please contact

xlopez1818@gmail.com.

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALASKA



April 25: Planning a trip up the Dalton Highway this summer? 🚗 🚚 🚲 We're getting ready to welcome you on an unforgettable journey to the far north – across the mighty Yukon River, past the Arctic Circle, through the heart of the Brooks Range, and beyond!

The #Arctic Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot will open for the season on Saturday, May 27. Stop in to see our award-winning exhibits, talk with friendly, knowledgeable staff, or join in a ranger program! Learn more at <http://ow.ly/GxVU50NJBjW>

Eager to go camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, or gold panning? There are many things to do along the Dalton! For travel tips and more information, download and read through the Dalton Highway Visitor Guide: <https://www.blm.gov/alaska/public-room/brochure/dalton-highway-visitor-guide>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Advocates make economic case for improving Alaska's outdoor trails: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2mb3fb>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Lake Clark Skate Date (another Luc Mehl adventure): <https://tinyurl.com/mrxzc22m>
- BLM Seeks Input on Campground Fee Changes, New Public Cabins: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9dcuwu>
- Kotzebue to Kivalina (a Luc Mehl adventure) <https://thingstolucat.com/2023/04/26/kotzebue-to-kivalina/>

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/training/calendar

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails “Trail Tracks”: www.americantrails.org/newsletter

VOLUNTEER

- Conservation Volunteers International Program newsletter (Apr): <https://tinyurl.com/4993dbpc>
- Am. Hiking Society’s 2023 Volunteer Vacations: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacation-trips/>

FUNDING

- FOX Factory Trail Trust (**applications reviewed quarterly**): <https://trailtrust.com/>
- Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OHVs, **quarterly deadlines**): <https://yamahaoai.com/>
- Clif Family Foundation grants (ddline June 1): <https://cliffamilyfoundation.org/grants-program>
- National Forest Foundation awards (deadline June 7): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- MAP: Announcing a Change to NFF’s Flagship Grant Program: <https://tinyurl.com/jhfm4ytt>

OTHER LINKS:

- Top 10 Requests for Trails and Outdoor Recreation Master Plans: <https://tinyurl.com/5ah3xtdn>
- American Trails Announces \$500K Fundraising Goal for Trails Program: <https://tinyurl.com/3wea7rmk>
- The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: How 7 Popular Trails Have Changed: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8bts6x>
- Review of Trails in Climate Resilience and Emergency Response: <https://tinyurl.com/56ujpy36>
- 2023 Advancing Trails Awards Announced: <https://tinyurl.com/yrbisyjm3>

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 and of the Fairbanks Cycle Club, a member of several Interior trail user groups, and a member of Alaska Trails and editor of its newsletter.