

# INTERIOR TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

JUNE 2023

## ALASKANS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL TRAILS DAY IN JUNE



**VOLUNTEER, JOIN IN** Two events will be held in the Interior in celebration of National Trails Day, Saturday, June 3. See the list below. Or you can check out the National Trails Day website: <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/find-an-event/>

National Trails Day is the American Hiking Society's signature trail awareness program. It inspires the public and trail enthusiasts nationwide to seek out their favorite trails to discover, learn about, and celebrate trails while participating in educational exhibits, trail dedications, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops, and trail work projects. For more info see: [www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/](http://www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/)

### FAIRBANKS

- Ester Dome Singletrack work party: <https://www.facebook.com/events/638431427830767/>

### DELTA JUNCTION

- Donnelly Dome Hike: <https://www.facebook.com/events/3398369883810374>

Also, the Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation has a work party scheduled for June 4. This this post from the group's Facebook page:

May 30: Volunteer opportunity AFTER National Trails Day!



Go play on National Trails Day!! Then come clean up Table Top Mountain trail at Nome Creek. Volunteers must be signed in per BLM VOLUNTEER RULES. Randy and Brian from IATPF will have the BLM form to sign.

We are brushing, so hedge trimmers (gas, electric) or loppers are the best. Please don't bring a chain saw.

We should be starting work SUNDAY JUNE 4 about 0900. We typically work until the early afternoon depending on weather. Should be on the NORTH side of the loop getting the dwarf birch cut back.

<https://www.lwpetersen.com/alaska-guide/table-top-mountain-trail/>

## PLATTING BOARD APPROVES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAILS PLAN

Last month, the Fairbanks Borough Platting Board adopted the borough administration's recommendations on advice to the Borough Assembly regarding the Fairbanks Comprehensive Trails Plan update.

### LINKS TO INTERIOR TRAIL INFORMATION

- List of apps that have many interior Alaska trails: [www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/web-sites/](http://www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/web-sites/)
- Interior Alaska Trails (a collection of trail-related resources): [www.interioralaskatrails.org/resources/](http://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))



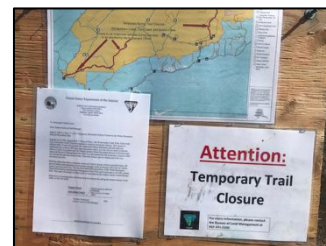
In March, the Borough Assembly had directed the Platting Board to “provide at least three alternative ways of connecting A and B trails without forcing landowners to give up their property through the platting process.”

After a lot of discussion, the Platting Board passed recommendations that had been crafted by Mayor Bryce Ward, Director of Community Planning Kellen Spillman, and Bryant Wright, former Borough Trails Coordinator who is on a temporary contract with the borough for this issue.

To read about the specific recommendations see this Interior Alaska Trails blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/37r693td>

## WHITE MOUNTAINS REC AREA NOT QUITE READY FOR SUMMER

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Eastern Interior Field Office will begin the summer season travel limitations for the White Mountains National Recreation Area and the Steese National Conservation Area on Saturday, May 13. As the summer season travel limitations take effect, the Wickersham Creek Trail, Trail Creek Trail, and Quartz Creek Trail will be temporarily closed to off-highway vehicles to prevent damage to wet trails during the transition to summer.



“I appreciate the public’s patience and support in this temporary closure to help protect the trails during this vulnerable time,” said Fairbanks District Office Manager Geoff Beyersdorf. “When people ride on wet trails in the spring, it leaves deep ruts that damage the trails and takes a lot of work to repair.”

The closure will last until the end of the month or until trails are sufficiently dry to allow off-highway vehicles and other motorized vehicle use that will not cause damage to the trails, as is indicated in the Eastern Interior White Mountains Record of Decision and approved Resource Management Plan. During the temporary closure, the trails remain open for hiking and other non-motorized use.

For more information see: <https://tinyurl.com/vp2epdz2>

*From BLM press release*

## 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](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livewith.moose)
- [www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/Wildlife.aspx](http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/Wildlife.aspx)



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

*Photo from Denali National Park by Ken Conger, National Park Service*

## 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*

## 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](mailto: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: [www.fws.gov/alaska-bird-nesting-season](http://www.fws.gov/alaska-bird-nesting-season)



*Photo from Denali 101: [www.denali101.com/denalinationalpark/birds\\_of\\_denali.html](http://www.denali101.com/denalinationalpark/birds_of_denali.html)*

## ORGANIZATION AIMS TO HELP CLEAN UP TRAILS WITH YOUR HELP

Clean Trails is an international 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a world-wide community of people dedicated to keeping our wild places and the trails that access those spaces free of litter.



According to the group, “study after study shows the highest indicator that someone will pick up litter is if they witness someone else picking up litter. That’s because peer group norms are more powerful than incentives, and when worked in concert with each other, they can provide impressive behavioral change impacts.”

If you’d like to help with this effort, check out the group’s website:

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

## HELP SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE: 1% FOR THE PLANET, CLIMATE RIDE

Climate changes affects everyone, including trail lovers.

Climate change and other environmental problems may seem like an overwhelming problem, but we humans created them one step at a time, and we can solve them that way, too. Let’s do what we can to now for our children, grandchildren, and beyond.

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

### *Join or Donate to 1% for the Planet*

The goal of this group is to “connect our members with high-impact environmental partners that align with their values and add to their brand story.”



The group was started in 2002 by Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia, and Craig Mathews, founder of Blue Ribbon Flies. It now has more than 5,000 members. If you are a business, you can join the group. But even if you are not a business owner, you can still donate to the group.

1% for the Planet does not focus solely on climate change, but that is a big part of it. If you become member, you get to choose your own cause.

Find out more at: <https://onepercentfortheplanet.org/>

### *Take a personal action*

Join or organize a fundraiser through Climate Ride: <https://www.climateride.org/>

Climate Ride helps mobilizes people to protect our planet through life-changing adventures. The group organizes charitable biking, running, and hiking events to raise awareness and support sustainability, active transportation, and environmental causes.

You can join one of the many already scheduled events, many are in-person but some allow for virtual participation. Or you can organize your own event or adventure. The page has a Design Your Own Event under its Events dropdown menu.

Find out more at: <https://www.climateride.org/>



## SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

### FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

May 26: Interested in helping build a new cabin for the White Mountain National Recreation Area trails? The Folk School has a cabin-building class for the soon-to-be newest White Mountains cabin.

<https://folk.school/events/event/log-cabin-construction-2/>





May 29: The Fairbanks Offroad Lions have been hard at work on a much-needed ORV park at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. This project has taken years of work between the borough and the Lions.

The park will be to the east of the part of South Cushman road that has a locked gate. That area already has some well-used four-wheeler trails. You can see where the park will be in this amendment to the Tanana Lakes Rec Area Master Plan:

[https://fairbanksak.myrec.com/documents/tananalakesmasterplanupdate\\_final.pdf](https://fairbanksak.myrec.com/documents/tananalakesmasterplanupdate_final.pdf)

You can see photos of some of the work done by the Lions on the group's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FairbanksOffroadLions>

Thank you, Lions!

May 26: John Risser already posted about some upcoming led trail walks being put on by the Fairbanks borough Parks and Rec Department. Looking at the Parks and Rec Event page, there are several more coming up. Keep an eye on it, if you're interested.

<https://www.facebook.com/FNSBParksandRecreation/events>

May 26: This is my last Spring Trails Report for the season. For the most part, trails are drying out nicely (despite today's rain). A few low-lying trails are still wet in places. Many of those are like that through much of the summer. Please just try to do the best you can to avoid damaging those areas.

The Chena River State Recreation Area is scheduled to open tomorrow. I haven't heard differently. Check the Alaska State Parks Facebook page for any updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaStateParks>

At last report, the White Mountains National Recreation Area trails were still closed to motorized use. I haven't heard any differently. Check the White Mountains Trail Conditions Report for updates:

<https://www.blm.gov/visit/white-mountains/trail-update>

Or the BLM-White Mountains Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BLMWhiteMountains/>

Last trail report here: <https://www.interioralaskatrails.org/2023/05/12/2022-spring-trail-reports/>

May 23: The updated Trails Plan goes before the Assembly on June 8. There is no public hearing on the plan at this meeting, however, the public may comment during comment section A which is for topics not on the agenda. Please consider testifying in support of the plan.

May 19: Mindy Eggleston of Delta Junction was one of the First Lady's Volunteer of the Year recipients. Among other things Mindy has helped start and run the Delta Junction Trails Association. Congratulations Mindy!

<https://gov.alaska.gov/first-ladys-volunteer-of-the-year-awards-ceremony-honors-seven-alaskans/>



#### FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

May 17: Just a reminder! Construction is ongoing up at Birch Hill! Please avoid parking in areas being worked on, beware of hazards and people working in the parking lots. Thank you for your patience!

Construction in the North & South Lot of Birch Hill begins May 9th and may continue into June. Please be advised!

### May 8: CONSTRUCTION UPDATE:

Today marks the official start of the Tanana River Recreation Access Improvements Project. This project will provide a multitude of much needed improvements to the park. Before heading to Tanana Lakes Recreation Area for some fun this summer, be sure to check our Facebook page or the Federal Highway Administration project page. We will post newsletters periodically throughout the summer to provide updates on areas affected by construction.

For more information, visit the links below: <https://www.fnsb.gov/1005/Ongoing-Projects>  
<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ak/fnsb-tanana-1>

### FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

May 21: Good opinion piece by John Schandelmeier in the Anchorage Daily News about University of Alaska on track to get more BLM land to develop to fund university operations. Schandelmeier focuses on the Denali Highway, but UA will probably be looking at BLM lands in other areas of the state, too.

This can be a prickly subject. Many of the same people who love using their public land also support the university. But sometimes those two interests can butt heads. As Schandelmeier speculates:

--UA Lands sent a letter to the DNR indicating a strong interest in the land along the Denali Highway. These lands are potentially recreational plots that could be sold to the public as small plots. Or potentially to a tour company for a large hotel. Some of the land is near Tangle Lakes; a subdivision?



Let me stress that no decisions have been made at this time. But right now is the time to have your voice heard, either pro or con. Comments can be sent to Lacy Hamner at [lacy.hamner@alaska.gov](mailto:lacy.hamner@alaska.gov). She is the DNR contact.--

Schandelmeier has some other useful information:

--Here is how the process works. The lands available for conveyance are under federal BLM management. Once UA Lands makes requests, DNR coordinates with affected state agencies to determine if it is in the state's best interest to relinquish the selection. But there is public input before decisions are finalized. They are posted on the state's public notice site and the first requests are expected to be received from the university this summer and fall.—

Here's the story: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8fc3bp>

And here's the state's public notice site. If you want to stay informed, check this site regularly or sign up for a subscription (see link at bottom): <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>

### INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Reframing Stupid: A "Summer" Ski Trip in the White Mountains: <https://tinyurl.com/yc6dfwem>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- FNSB Parks & Rec- Intro To Hiking, July 12: [www.facebook.com/events/781126250143226/](http://www.facebook.com/events/781126250143226/)
- REI classes in June on hiking, backpacking (free): <https://www.rei.com/events/p/us-ak-fairbanks>

## STATEWIDE

### NEW HUB ALLOWS YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL

Alaska Trails is excited to announce the online mapping resource for the Alaska Long Trail. Visitors to the brand-new Alaska Long Trail ArcGIS Hub can:

- Explore interactive maps of the ALT with links to trail guides
- Share suggestions and feedback about the entire ALT or specific segments
- Plan an Alaska Long Trail adventure and hike, bike, or packraft portions of the most completed section between Seward and Eagle River.



If you are interested in adventuring on any of the Alaska Long Trail segments between Seward and Eagle River this summer, Alaska Trails will be grateful for your feedback at the end of your journey. You can sign up to be contacted here: <https://tinyurl.com/4ts299xz>

Check out the hub here: <https://the-alaska-long-trail-hub-alaska-trails.hub.arcgis.com/>

### STATEWIDE LINKS

- Hiking tips and etiquette: What to know before tackling the trails (ADN): <https://tinyurl.com/4z7v37nb>
- Big water, little boat: Tatshenshini River to Yakutat (Luc Mehl trip): <https://tinyurl.com/432yztm3>

#### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Explore Regenerative Economics at Confluence in Fairbanks, September: <https://tinyurl.com/ya2e3955>
- Teller To Wales: Riding And Rafting The Alaskan Coast: <https://tinyurl.com/223hdkwd>
- Veteran-run nonprofit uses therapeutic recreation to help other veterans: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhd8m9r>
- Bridge Project to Get Underway this Summer (Denali National Park): <https://tinyurl.com/2739tbcy>

## NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

### TRANSIT TO TRAILS ACT REINTRODUCED IN NATIONAL HOUSE

One of American Hiking's biggest legislative priorities, the Transit to Trails Act has been reintroduced. Heather Klein Olson, Acting Executive Director was featured in the congressional press release, "American Hiking Society praises the reintroduction of the Transit to Trails Act by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), which will expand access to public lands for urban and rural areas, especially underserved communities by reducing transportation barriers. This legislation will make sure that the communities that need them most will be able to access trails, parks, and open spaces. Congress must swiftly pass this legislation as part of transportation and infrastructure legislation." Add your voice to support this act here: <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/transit-to-trails-act-take-action/>

*From American Hiking Association newsletter*

## 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](http://www.americantrails.org/training/calendar)

### TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails "Trail Tracks": [www.americantrails.org/newsletter](http://www.americantrails.org/newsletter)

### VOLUNTEER

- 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/>
- National Forest Foundation awards (deadline June 7): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

### OTHER LINKS:

- Comprehensive Mountain Bike Trail Development Resource: <https://tinyurl.com/yckw8fsa>
- Trails Capacity Program 2022/23 Impact Report: <https://tinyurl.com/3d6h4xbe>
- Google Maps Enhances National Parks Features for Easier Exploration: <https://tinyurl.com/ykb4ze9e>

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](mailto: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.