

INTERIOR ALASKA TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

FEB 2024

FAIRBANKS BOROUGH HIRES NEW PARKS AND REC DIRECTOR

The Fairbanks Borough Parks and Recreation Department has a new director. See the following from a press release. (To see the entire press release go to: <https://www.fnsb.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=958>)

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Matthew "Matt" Boyer as the new Parks and Recreation Director. Mr. Boyer brings a wealth of experience and a passion for community engagement to this important role.

Mr. Boyer holds a Bachelor of Science in Health, Leisure, and Sports from the University of West Florida and a Master of Arts in Recreation Administration from the University of Florida. He is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) with the National Recreation and Park Association, an ACE Personal Trainer, and a Wilderness First Responder.

With an impressive professional background, Mr. Boyer has worked at various universities, including Louisiana State University and Central Washington University. His recreation administration expertise and commitment to fostering healthy and vibrant communities make him an ideal fit for the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

As the Parks and Recreation Director, Mr. Boyer will oversee all parks and recreation programs and facilities operated by the borough. This includes managing a dedicated team of over fifty permanent staff members and a large seasonal workforce. In addition, he will provide valuable support to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Trails Advisory Commission.



FAIRBANKS PARKS AND REC WINTER TRAILS CHALLENGE IS LIVE

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department is hosting another Winter Trails Challenge.



The sign list was revealed in late December for this popular ongoing event, which is free and open to anyone. Participants need to be registered to be eligible for prizes and awards. See "Trails Office page" link below to register.

The Fairbanks Trails Challenge is an all-ages, all-abilities, outdoor scavenger hunt designed to get you out with your friends and family to explore our wonderful local trails, both new and familiar. Each summer and winter season, Parks Department staff temporarily installs special signs in secret locations along a dozen

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)

or so local trails. While the signs are up, we invite everyone to visit the trails and try and find the signs. Along the way we hope you have a chance to learn new skills, see new places, and make positive memories.

Participants who find at least ten signs during the event can win prizes from local sponsors and the coveted Trailblazer Award. Participants under the age of 10 can find at least five signs to win the Junior Trailblazer Award, and seniors aged 60+ can find 5 to get win the Sourdough Trailblazer Award! To claim

- Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/313549044989446/313549048322779/>
- Trails Office page: <http://tinyurl.com/mr4zr7ec>

Photo from Evangeline Orr from the Facebook Event

JOIN GROUP, IMPROVE HOME EFFICIENCY, SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE

JOIN, ACT Climate changes affects everyone, especially winter sports enthusiasts like snowmachiners, mushers, cross-country skiers, and fatbikers.

A warming climate can mean shorter snow seasons, and more extreme events like snow droughts and rain-on-snow events. These will just get worse unless we slow climate change, which means we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Here is something you can do right now to help make a difference.

Join Winter Wildlands Alliance

<https://winterwildlands.org/>

Winter Wildlands Alliance is a national nonprofit organization working to fight to protect America's snowscapes.



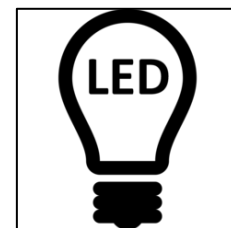
One of the group's ambassadors is Luc Mehl, an Alaskan cross-country skier and all-around outdoors adventurer. Mehl is just one of many skiers who are ambassadors for the group. See Mehl's profile and all the other Winter Wildlands Alliance (WWA) ambassadors here: <https://winterwildlands.org/ambassadors>

Climate change is just one of the issues the group fights for, but it's a big one. Climate change affects everyone, especially cross-country skiers. A warming climate can mean shorter snow seasons, and more extreme events like snow droughts and rain-on-snow events. These will just get worse unless we slow climate change, which means we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Take a personal action

Improve energy efficiency of your house. There are many steps you can take to improve your home's energy efficiency. Some are as easy as screwing in a light bulb, while others are more complicated, such as adding insulation. Ideas about on the internet. Here are two articles with some good ideas from:

- Earthwatch: <https://tinyurl.com/yb4ysb6y>
- This Old House: <https://tinyurl.com/5xdxfuty>



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.

Photo courtesy of Luc Mehl: Mehl shows off a field repair he did on a ski binding while out on a long ski.

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

January 22

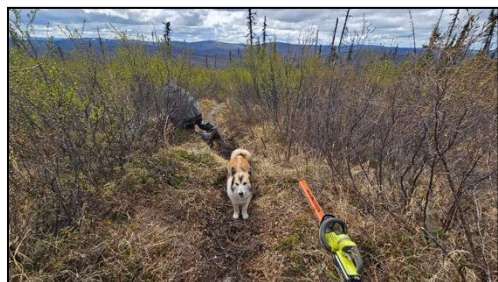
APPLY Interested in outdoor recreation and passionate about the trails in our community? Consider serving on the Trails Advisory Commission! There are several vacant seats needing to be filled. Members of the board and commissions must be qualified voters of the borough and remain residents of the borough while in office. Visit the FNSB webpage for more info: <https://fnsb.gov/430/Trails-Advisory-Commission>

INTERIOR ALASKA TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION

January 6

DONATE Welcome 2024!

2023 saw another major cash project on the ADMA trails. We financed more smoothing of the tussocks to create an awesome base for sprint dogs, skijoring folks, and fat bikes!



IATPF also participated in volunteer work on trails around our great city of Fairbanks!

Now that we FORMALLY have our trail project funding application on line (see pinned post at the top of our Facebook page or at IATPF.ORG) we are looking for trail supporters to donate in support of REAL trail maintenance!

See our profile on: <https://www.pickclickgive.org/>

Go apply for your PFD before March 31 and select us for a donation! Let's start maintaining trails in the Interior! <https://pfd.alaska.gov/>

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

January 28

DONATE There is a new way to pay for grooming and trail maintenance for the Skarland Trail and Pearl Creek Park trails, including the Fairbanks Golf Course trails.

Shared from

Skarland & Pearl Creek Park Trail Users > Stan Justice

January 28

There is now a PayPal way to make donations for trail maintenance. Please let us know if below instructions need editing. You can still mail a check to Tako Reynolds, 1819 Muskox Trail, Fairbanks, AK 99709-6626 if you prefer.

To Make a Donation to Support Maintenance & Groom of Pearl Creek & Skarland Area XC-Ski Trails, follow these directions:

- 1) Log into PayPal by your preferred method, or Scan the QR CODE given below with your mobile phone camera
- 2) Click "SEND" button
- 3) Enter "Pearl Creektrails" (yep it is spelled & spaced just like that).
- 4) Enter amount you want to donate
- 5) Enter how you want to pay
- 6) Select "Friends and Family" (do not select goods & services - that incurs a fee to Pearl Creek Fund)



7) Click “send” and you are done.

Enjoy our great neighborhood ski-trails! Thank you for your donation to help with trail maintenance costs! (Thanks heaps to our Volunteer Trail Groomers who give their time, their equipment, and fuel !)

And thanks to those from the before times, who cleared these trails, who spawned the idea of a community supported ski-trail network and who later conceived & created the public park. Without their foresight and action to buy these woodlands from Alaska Airlines these trails would now be covered by houses & garages and driveways. And, thank you to the private property owners adjacent to the Skarland & Pearl Creek Trails who allow access to the ski trails by allowing limited public passage across their lands.

Photo of Skarland & Pearl Creek grooming machine by Stan Justice

January 25

Presentation coming up Wednesday, February 28, about winter biking in the Whites coming up by long-time adventurer Jay Cable: <http://tinyurl.com/3dv49zwd>

January 24

Fairbanks Boro Trails Commission had a meeting about the proposed wind farm in the Murphy Dome area.

>Shared from

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

The project calls for up to 50 turbines spaced approximately a half mile apart, along with new transmission lines, a substation and maintenance facility. During construction, gravel pits and a maintenance yard would be required. <http://tinyurl.com/5z7h7w5m>

January 22



KUAC story on the grooming situation along the Denali Highway. A bigger grant means more frequent grooming. <https://fm.kuac.org/Local%20News/2024-01-22/denali-highway-grooming-steps-up>

January 20

COMMENT The final version of the Fairbanks Comprehensive Roads Plan is out and open for comment. Anyone who uses area roads and trails should be aware of the plan and should comment if they feel a need.

Please read the details about the plan. Many people seem to jump to conclusions about what will happen if the plan is passed. Know that just because a road is on the plan doesn't mean it will necessarily be built. And this is NOT a call to action for the borough government to build these roads. It's just a plan to prepare for future possibilities. Please be knowledgeable before drawing any conclusions.

You can find out more here. <http://tinyurl.com/36zrske2>



January 15



If you like to use GaiaGPS for navigation, know that Trail Forks trails can now be seen on the GaiaGPS as a layer. Nice integration. While Trail Forks has mainly been known as a mountain biking app, it includes many other activities. Many Alaska trails are on Trail Forks. Here's an article about the integration of GaiaGPS and Trail

Forks. <https://blog.gaiagps.com/trailforks-mtb/>

January 8

For those who like to use online resources to find trails, here's another one.

OpenStreetMap is a free, editable map of the whole world built by volunteers and with an open-content license. Not specifically a trails map, but it has a lot of trails. However, the content is not necessarily ground-truthed and may include private and/or bandit trails.

<https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=8/64.760/-149.293>

January 3

Alaska State Parks had been planning to raise fees in 2024 for park passes, some daily parking fees, and some cabin rental fees. However, those fee increases have been rescinded. The increase had been announced in November. According to the Anchorage Daily News: "the new fee schedule was published online before a 'proper review and approval process' could be completed." <http://tinyurl.com/422863xx>



January 1

There's a new multi-sport trail race on the Fairbanks trail-racing calendar headed up by Tekla Butcher-Monson, daughter of Dave Monson and the late, great Susan Butcher. This race includes mushing. And the organizers need help to open up some trails.



--The T-Dog 200 route relies on disused and "brushed in" historic trails. The "T-Dog Trail Breakers" need your help cleaning up the trails between Fairbanks, Nenana, Minto, Eureka and Manley Hot Springs. We are eager to put on a longer race in the Tanana Valley, but it will only be possible if we get the trails cleared. Contact us today to see how you can become involved!—

If you want to race or help clear trail, find out more here: <https://trailbreakerkennel.com/home/t-dog/>

December 29

Trying to decide where to recreate outside in winter can sometimes be a challenge. Getting good information about weather, especially temperatures and wind, can help make that decision easier. Fortunately, the internet has a variety of resources. This page has collected several that are useful for Fairbanks and Interior Alaska. www.interioralaskatrails.org/interior-alaska-temperature-weather/



STATEWIDE

GOV. DUNLEAVY ISSUES ORDERS TO ELIMINATE BOARDS

COMMENT Gov. Mike Dunleavy recently issued 12 executive orders, eliminating or reorganizing a wide range of boards and commissions. One of those being eliminated is the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board. Also included for elimination is the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council.

Alaska Public Media has a story on the orders, which are causing concern amongst some lawmakers.

From the story: Through his communications staff, Dunleavy declined an interview for this story. But in a prepared statement, spokesperson Jessica Bowers said the purpose of the orders was to “make state government as efficient and effective as possible.”

The Alaska Legislature can prevent them from becoming law. If you feel strongly about the executive orders, whether you support or oppose them, you should let your legislators know. **Find out who your legislators are and how to contact them here:**

<https://akleg.gov/faq.php#1>. You can also contact the governor here:

<https://gov.alaska.gov/contact/>

See the Alaska Public Media story here: <http://tinyurl.com/ykp2tt8u>

The orders eliminating the rivers board (number 134) and the Wood-Tikchik board (number 126) and be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/dawvmzaa>



Photo of Gulkana River by Bob Wick, BLM.

GRIZZLY WOOD MAKERS TO PARTICIPATE IN TRAILS CONFERENCE

ATTEND Mark your calendar for our annual trails conference to be held April 10-12 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage.

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. This year we will

have both in-person and virtual options for attendance. We hope you can join us, and we welcome your ideas and feedback on how to make the most of this gathering. **Send your ideas and comments to:** office@alaska-trails.org

Alaska Plastic Recovery, makers of Grizzly Wood, will be one of the new companies participating at the conference. Grizzly Wood is an innovative recycled plastic lumber made entirely from 100% recycled plastics and sourced partly from Alaskan beaches. It presents a sustainable and scientifically advantageous alternative for trail rehabilitation. Its impermeability to moisture and resistance to

environmental factors like high humidity and temperature fluctuations address key issues inherent in natural wood, such as rot and structural deformation under load. These properties ensure enhanced durability and longevity of trail structures, making Grizzly Wood a practical and environmentally friendly choice for trail rehabilitation, especially in challenging or sensitive environments. Find out more at:

<https://alaskaplasticrecovery.com/>

To view recorded sessions and presentation slides from past conferences see our archives at: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/conference-archive-links>.



USE “PICK. CLICK. GIVE.” TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS DONATE

DONATE Giving back to the trails you love is easy! Help maintain, improve, and build new trails for you and your fellow Alaskans by choosing Alaska Trails for your annual Pick. Click. Give. Donations. When you file for your PFD, choose Alaska Trails to ensure the trails in our backyards are safe, sustainable, and fun for all and that we can complete the Alaska Long Trail, a world-class trail system connecting Seward to Fairbanks!



Giving through your PFD is a secure and easy way to make a donation.

When you file for your PFD online, you will be given the opportunity to select a non-profit to receive a portion of 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.” visit: www.pickclickgive.org/

Link to the Alaska Trails “PCG” page: www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails

ALASKA TRAILS HIRING FOR SEASONAL TRAIL CREW POSITIONS

APPLY Alaska Trails is hiring for two crews planned for seasonal trail work in 2024. Trail crews will work in Chugach State Park and the Chugach National Forest.

Trail crew members and leaders will play a pivotal role in trail maintenance and construction projects in Southcentral Alaska. Duties include daily hiking in steep, rocky terrain, structure work, and using hand and power tools to maintain and construct sustainable trails.



More information for all the positions and application instructions at: www.alaska-trails.org/jobs

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALASKA

January 14



This photo was taken at noon this week in the northernmost United States community of Utqiagvik.

The BLM and its partners help maintain a community access trail, allowing the community and industry freight supplies overland during winter.

Read more about the trail system here: <https://ow.ly/gGBa50QqtNb>

LUC MEHL

January 26

I created this chart for my **Start & End at Home** course to show participants how well it works for me to cherry-pick the best features from multiple apps.

You can download the sharper PDF version here:

<https://courses.thingstolucate.com/mailling-list>

Start & End at Home is a wilderness risk management and trip planning course—we’ll review all of these tools. The course includes free trials of Gaia, CalTopo, and On X. **We start Feb 1!**

<https://courses.thingstolucate.com/>

	GAIA	CALTPO	ON X	PEPPER	ONX	ONX
ROUTE DRAWING AND EDITING	***	***	**	**	**	**
DISSEMINATION	*	*	*	**	**	**
USER FRIENDLY	***	**	**	**	**	**
ROUTE PLANNING	***	***	**	**	**	**
TRAILING TRAILS, ROUTES, ETC.	**	**	**	**	**	**
PUBLIC TRACKS	***	**	**	**	**	**
FEATURE ORGANIZATION	**	**	**	**	**	**
PRINTING	**	**	**	**	**	**
SHARING	***	***	**	**	**	**
IMPORT/EXPORT	**	**	**	**	**	**
SHARING	**	**	**	**	**	**
NAVIGATION APP	***	***	**	**	**	**
DETERMINING ROUTE	***	***	**	**	**	**
NUMBER OF LAYERS	***	***	*	**	**	**
NOT SATELLITE BASED	**	**	**	**	**	**
NOT EXPENSIVE	**	**	**	**	**	**
LAYERS	***	***	**	**	**	**
SLOPE ANGLE SHADING	**	**	**	**	**	**
LAND OWNERSHIP	**	**	**	**	**	**
WINTER MANAGEMENT LAYERS	**	**	**	**	**	**
DETERMINING LAYERS	**	**	**	**	**	**

Disclaimer: This chart is based on my personal experience, with biases and gaps in knowledge. I haven't tried every feature in every app. I will update the chart as I gain experience. I'm not trying to convince anyone of anything other than that planning and preparation is a good thing.

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Alps-Style Hut-to-Hut Travel Is on Its Way to Alaska: <http://tinyurl.com/3ehatptk>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Mathews River and Wiehl Mountain: an Alaskan Brooks Range Traverse: <http://tinyurl.com/2ae4ze2b>
- OPINION: State investment in outdoor recreation helps Alaska's economy: <http://tinyurl.com/5622j3ya>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

AMERICAN TRAILS CALLS FOR WEBINAR PRESENTERS

From American Trails: We are currently working on scheduling webinars for 2024 and beyond in our Advancing Trails Webinar Series. We have held over 220 webinars over the last 12 years and we aren't stopping any time soon! We will continue to offer weekly webinars (when applicable) and are slated to hold 35+ webinars every year!

If you are interested in presenting a webinar, please submit a topic via our online form, noting our topics of interest: <https://form.jotform.com/223625134367152>

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

- Am. Hiking Society's 2024 Volunteer Vacations: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacation-trips/>
 - Alternative (to Spring) Break: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/alternative-break/>
- Conservation International VIP newsletter (Jan 2024): <http://tinyurl.com/3brpasuh>

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 (for groups; ddlines March 1, August 1): <https://tinyurl.com/5bku286n>
- Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. grants (ATV trail projects; due March 1, Sept 1): <https://tinyurl.com/y49dxbhe>

OTHER LINKS:

- Parks, Trails, Health Workbook: www.americantrails.org/resources/parks-trails-and-health-workbook
- Winter Placemaking Guide: www.americantrails.org/resources/winter-placemaking-guide
- How to Map Trails in OpenStreetMap: <https://openstreetmap.us/our-work/trails/how-to-map/>
- Why Trails Matter: Trails are Inclusive: www.americantrails.org/resources/trails-are-inclusive
- 2023 NRT Photo Contest Winners Announced: <http://tinyurl.com/y68jzmnb>

Interior Alaska 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 Alaska Trails Newsletter is not a product of any organization. However, I am a board member of the Interior Trails Preservation Coalition, president of the Fairbanks Cycle Club, a member of several Interior trail user groups, and editor of the Alaska Trails newsletter.