

For me, it was trails.

About 10 years ago I was running on a long-used trail, and I came across a no-trespassing sign. I was indignant. "He can't do that!" I grumbled.

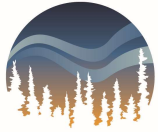
So I looked into it. And what I found out was that he definitely **could** do that. It was his property, and the trail had no



easement. I had no right to be there, and he had every right to put up that sign. There was actually a gap in the platted easement where it crossed that property. I've since learned that that trail was **supposed** to be platted when the neighborhood was subdivided in the 80's, but someone at the Borough just didn't do it, so now that trail has no protections. That hole in the map is not, after all, the fault of the current landowner.

After that, I started looking into options for what I could do, and started learning about trails in Fairbanks. It was through this process that someone (also at the Borough) introduced me to the IALT. What I found was a small group of people that care about Fairbanks, understand the eccentricities of this place, love it, and work hard to protect the outdoor places that we play. I joined the Board.

Another thing that I learned is that that trail is hardly unique; countless trails around Fairbanks, the ones that make it so that we enjoy living here - the ones we ski on, bike on, snowmachine on, ATV, run, walk, everything - a huge number of them sit in a hole in the map and don't have any legal protections. That particular trail's situation has only gotten worse (there's no easy fix), but in the time I've been on the Board at the IALT, I've been happy about the amount of trails that we **HAVE** been able to protect. Trails have been protected in Goldstream, in Chena Flats, on Farmer's Loop, in North Pole and more. Some of the main, arterial trails



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across Goldstream Valley have been protected thanks to residents that have forwarded us for-sale postings, donated their own land, worked with us during the sometimes-slow process of IALT acquiring a parcel, sent their neighbors our way, and, perhaps most importantly, contributed financially to acquiring these parcels. The holes in the map slowly get filled.

A lot of what we protect is swamps. You know the ones, the ones with black spruce and deep moss. The kind where the ground looks dry but you know you'll get your sneakers wet if you walk through it without rubber boots. And the kind where the cold really settles in the winter. I lived in a rainy climate for a while, and I hated it, but I love that deep Fairbanks cold. The kind where the tree branches snap off with a touch and the snow squeaks. Where your breath shines in the sun and your eyelashes freeze together. The last of the moisture gets squeezed out of the air onto the branches of those forlorn, only-a-mother-could-love black spruce. But then the sun shines on them and turns the whole world into a chandelier.

That's a lot of our work. We look at Fairbanks, and find the holes in the greenbelts and properties with contiguous public access. We try to fill those holes. We've filled a lot of them, but there are a lot left - I live near some pretty big ones, including that first trail. We work with willing landowners, which makes this a long game. But with your help, we can keep plugging the holes.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Solstice and holiday season,

Seth Adams

Seth Adams
IALT Board of Directors

Conserving land north of the Alaska Range for the benefit of the community