

INTERIOR ALASKA TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

MAY 2024

ALASKA LONG TRAIL NEEDS YOUR FEEDBACK!



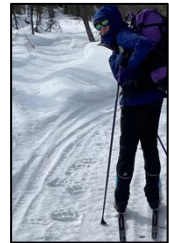
The BLM is continuing its feasibility study to assess the Alaska Long Trail for the National Scenic Trail designation. The public comment period is open through June 28th via the online interactive map tool located on the Eplanning project page (<https://tinyurl.com/22tvsytu>). Additionally, three virtual listening Zoom sessions are scheduled in June 2024 (<https://tinyurl.com/4588kzwy>). Your

feedback on the proposed route is appreciated!

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

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 must get muddy, please limit your activities to trails that are already thrashed.

An alternative to using trails in the spring is to get out on foot or by bike

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)

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.

Photo: Erosion on Ester Dome Singletrack Trails

BE CAREFUL OF 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 changes 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

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/>



- 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

FAIRBANKS TRAIL AND WATERWAY USERS

April 29

FAST Planning has the dates for its annual Bike & Ped Count set. Let's try to get as many people volunteering for this as we can. Having accurate numbers helps transportation officials make plans for more and better non-motorized infrastructure, including trails, of course. Sign up here:

<https://fastplanning.us/bpcount/>

April 24

This is specifically about Denali National Park, but it's a good reminder for all of us that the bears are starting to awaken. Be prepared when you are out using trails.

>Shared from Denali National Park and Preserve

✨🐻 The Bear Awakening Department 🐻✨

Grizzly bears are emerging from torpor (or hibernation) here in Denali National Park and Preserve. Visitors should make noise on trail (like singing your new favorite album🎵), travel in groups, and carry bear spray. Expect to encounter bears anywhere in the park. Denali regulations require visitors to stay at least 300 yards (275 meters) from grizzly bears - that's about the length of three football fields. A good rule of thumb is if you can easily tell that it's a grizzly bear without using binoculars or a camera zoom lens, you are too close. Wildlife should never be approached in the park. For more wildlife safety information, please visit our website or speak to a ranger before going out in bear country.



Be bear aware and stay unplugged from music devices when out in the park!

NPS Photo / K. Miller; Image description: A mother grizzly bear lays on her back as her two cubs crawl on her.

ALASKA STATE PARKS

April 26

ASP2402623

On April 22, 2024, at approximately 1600 hours, Alaska State Park Rangers in Fairbanks located an incident of vandalism at the Chena Wayside. Investigation revealed the Kids Don't Float board had been broken down and burned in the parking lot. Damages are estimated at \$600. Anyone with information regarding this case is encouraged to call Alaska State Parks at (907) 451-2695 or the Alaska State Troopers at (907)451-5100.

This KDF kiosk was a local eagle scout project. KTVF in Fairbanks also did a piece.

<https://tinyurl.com/27ea6re4>

April 22



****Chena River State Recreation Area Alert****

All trails in the Chena River State Recreation Area will be CLOSED to MOTORIZED use from April 22nd - May 24th. 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 22nd - May 24th.

Thank you! 😊👉

UAF NORTH CAMPUS

April 24

Hi Everyone! Are you sorry to see the ski season winding down but thankful for all the wonderful trail maintenance provided by UAF this year? Have you been wondering if there is a way to donate to support trail maintenance? Good news, there is a way to donate! Check out www.uaf.edu/northcampus and click the Donate to trail maintenance button. Thank you for a great season and see you on the trails!

NORDIC SKI CLUB OF FAIRBANKS

April 27

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is still fundraising for the ski trail system to be developed right outside of the Patty Center on UAF's south slope: <https://tinyurl.com/4rv2fup5>

For those interested in finding out more, a copy of the proposal can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/5x8duvdb>

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Skyline Ridge Trail Issue to Come Before Assembly in May: <https://tinyurl.com/bdh9yn2c>

SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Avoid Driving on Fairbanks Forestry Roads During Breakup: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhy7y3p>

STATEWIDE

ALASKA STATE PARKS POSITIONS CAN INCLUDE TRAIL WORK

Alaska State Parks has a variety of seasonal positions through its the Alaska Conservation Corps (ACC), which are paid jobs, and its volunteer program. Tasks will vary and may include trail work, maintenance, fee station, or office work. Most positions begin in late May or early June. Some offices will start recruitment as early as March. You may wish to call the office in the area you wish to work in, to find out what positions they are offering this year and when applications are being accepted. For more information see:



- ACC: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/accinstr.htm>
- Volunteer Program: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/index.htm>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Tips for tackling Alaska's world-renowned hiking trails: <https://tinyurl.com/p7szx2r6>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Major Work on Pretty Rocks Bridge (Denali National Park): <https://tinyurl.com/3a8rijsbr>
- 2024 Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic: <https://tinyurl.com/3ummwze2>
- Belgian man to brave Denali climb in human-powered quest: <https://tinyurl.com/5fs42zmk>
- Thousand-Mile Summer of Trekking the Brooks Range (book): <https://tinyurl.com/bdef24wf>
- Iditarod finish line's iconic Burling Arch collapses in Nome: <https://tinyurl.com/5esnptaw>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

GROUPS CAN JOIN SUPPORT OF FY25 FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TRAILS

American Trails is looking for organizations to add their name to a sign-on letter in support of robust federal funding for our nation's trails in the Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations legislation. The group also has advice on how to apply for funding with the House and Senate. Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/46s6wpjn>

INDIVIDUALS CAN SIGN LETTER TO ADVOCATE FOR EXPLORE ACT

From the American Hiking Society:

Recently, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE Act), which will help get people outdoors by modernizing federal recreation systems and eliminate barriers of access to the outdoors.

This legislation includes the Outdoors for All Act which expands access to outdoor recreation opportunities in cities and towns, particularly in underserved areas. This has been a legislative priority for American Hiking and the trails community for years. Make your voice heard now and send your senator a message today!

<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/advocacy/>

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

WEBINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- American Trails calendar (trail webinars workshops, etc): 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/>

FUNDING

- FOX Factory Trail Trust (applications reviewed quarterly): <https://trailtrust.com/>

- Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OHVs, **quarterly deadlines**): <https://yamahaoai.com/>
- Polaris Donates More Than \$130,000 To Off-Road And Snow Organizations <https://tinyurl.com/yc3vsyv>
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ddline June 17): <https://tinyurl.com/ymny7hhp>
- National Forest Foundation awards (deadlines June 21): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

OTHER LINKS:

- EXPLORE Act Passes House, Moves On To Senate: <https://tinyurl.com/5xamus7x>
- Against All Odds, Black Women Are Hitting The Trails: <https://tinyurl.com/5fer5ex9>

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.