

INTERIOR ALASKA TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of trails in interior Alaska

JULY 2024

EVENT TO OFFICIALLY OPEN NEW TRAIL ON UAF CAMPUS

The Alaska Fire Science Consortium invites you to the opening of UAF's new Wildfire Walk, an interpretive trail to the site of the 2021 Yankovich Road Fire! The event will be held on July 11 from 3-5 p.m. at the Wildfire Walk trailhead located at the Large Animal Research Station parking lot at 2220 Yankovich Road.



During the event, visitors can attend guided tours at 3:15 and 4:15 p.m. to learn about the fire site and hear how university scientists and wildfire managers work together to improve wildfire response and preparedness in Alaska. Spruce the Moose, state forestry's wildfire prevention mascot, will be at LARS sharing how people can reduce the number of human-caused wildfires in the wildland-urban interface.

The wildfire walk is designed as an outdoor learning experience. It contains nine interpretive signs describing the relationship between wildfire and the boreal forest, fire science and climate change, and wildfire prevention. It is one mile and takes approximately 40 minutes to complete.

To learn more about the walk visit <https://tinyurl.com/WildfireWalk> or contact Heather McFarland, hmcfarland@alaska.edu.

From Heather McFarland; photo by Eric Troyer

CHALLENGE OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES TO FIND TRAILS IN INTERIOR

The Fairbanks Summer Trails Challenge is live with 20 signs up and ready to find all over the borough.

The challenge started June 20 and lasts until September 30.

There are three categories: Trailblazer, Junior Trailblazer, and Sourdough Trailblazer. Trailblazers are 10 years old and up and must find at least 10 signs. Junior Trailblazers are up to 9 years old and must find five signs. Sourdough Trailblazers are 60 years and up and must find at least five signs.

This event, put on by the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department, is an all-ages, all-abilities, outdoor scavenger hunt. The challenge is designed to get you out with your friends and family to explore our wonderful local trails, both new and familiar.



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)

Anyone is allowed to participate in the search. When you find a sign, mark it off on your checklist, which you get when you register. You no longer need to prove you nabbed a sign by taking a selfie, but participants are still encouraged to take the photos and post them on social media with the hashtag “#FNSBTrails”. Putting it on the Trails Challenge Facebook Event (under the Discussion tab) is a great way to share. And of course, leave the sign to be found by the next trail challenge participant.

Participants who find the minimum number of signs for their category get their official award and can win prizes. Whether you find one or find them all, challenge yourself to get outside and enjoy nature!

To register, find out more and see a list of signs, see the Fairbanks Borough Trails Office webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/ut7wxkew>

Check out the Trails Challenge Facebook Event here: <https://tinyurl.com/ypm3cy7k>

Get your Trails Challenge Guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/mu59k2s3>

Photo from Evangeline Orr post on 2023 Facebook Event page.

Note: The Grapefruit Rocks and Wickersham Dome signs are in an area threatened by the Globe Fire. Please DO NOT attempt the trail while there is fire activity in the area. Stay informed by visiting <https://akfireinfo.com/> for more wildfire information. UPDATE: That area is officially closed: <https://tinyurl.com/y6verhzy>

INTERIOR TRAILS GROUP CEASES BUT WORK CONTINUES

In May the Interior Trails Preservation Coalition quietly dissolved.

While it had accomplished a lot since it was formed in 2002, the group had been mostly inactive in recent years. When it folded, the group was still monitoring a trail-access issue regarding the Equinox Marathon trail on Ester Dome. Some members of the group, including its most recent president, Stan Justice, are still monitoring that issue. More on that at the end of the story.

Though the group has folded, trails are still represented in Interior Alaska. In 2018, the Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation (IATPF) formed “to develop, maintain and promote a year-round trails and parks system for the greater Fairbanks area and beyond.” Justice has formed another group, Fairbanks Trails Inc., that focuses more on trail maintenance, though it will also advocate for trails when appropriate. And the author of this article, Eric Troyer, is still advocating for trails through this blog/website (run with the help of Don Kiely) and his free monthly Interior Alaska Trails Newsletter, which started in 2006.



When the ITPC folded, it had about \$7,700 in its bank account. The remaining directors of the group split that money between the IATPF and Fairbanks Trails.

For more see this post: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9ux8cu>

Eric Troyer photo of ITPC erosion work done on Equinox Marathon Trail in 2012

SEEN RECENTLY ON INTERIOR FACEBOOK PAGES

FAIRBANKS TRAILS AND WATERWAY USERS

June 29

Work on the Tanana River Recreation Access Project affects some trails at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. Check for updates here: <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ak/fnsb-tanana-1>

June 20

Excerpt from the June 18 Tuesday Night MTB Ride report:

The Eva Creek Trail, by the way, has a little reroute by the driveway about halfway down. It's a little rough but bikeable. The reroute is legal and has the advantage of routing trail users away from the house at the end of the "Not a Road" Road.

<https://www.fairbankscycleclub.org/2024/06/05-21-2024-tnr-mtb-ride-report/>

June 18

Science writer Ned Rozell tackled the recent AlaskaAcross wilderness race recently, connecting a trail on Eagle Summit to a portion of the Yukon Quest Trail with some off-trail bushwhacking in between. Read about the adventure here: <https://tinyurl.com/cwkhtexa>

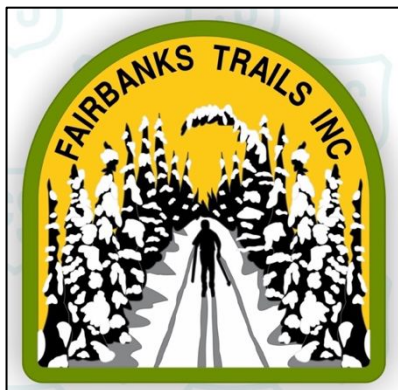
June 6

The newly formed Fairbanks Trails has some trail work parties planned.

>Shared from Stan Justice

June 6

We have ordered our first swag! It will be a 3 inch embroidered patch based on awesome art by Christina Turman. Anyone that comes to a work party gets a patch. Here is the schedule (the first of every month).



- July 1 6 to 8 pm - Meet at Red Fox Rd and Historic Ski Hill/Commuter Trail. We will be improving existing bench to eliminate sidehills and get more width for grooming.
- August 1 6-8 pm - Meet at Dalton Trail and Charli Jo (near Kittiwake). Will be working on benching to eliminate sidehill and get more width for grooming.
- September 1 6-8 pm Meet at last towers on Equinox Out and Back. We will be draining the puddles on the Equinox Trail. With the return of the relay there will more runners on this two way section of the course.
- October 1 6 - 8 pm TBD

NORDIC SKI CLUB OF FAIRBANKS

June 13

Work started June 10 on a new sprint ski course at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The work is planned to continue to mid-July. A 1.25-kilometer course will be built with extensions that will make a 2.5-kilometer course. Both loops will be FIS-homologated (certified as sufficient to meet standards for FIS competitions). Start and finish will be on the athletic field outside of the Student Recreation Center.

Photo by John Estle (NSCF Head Groomer Tom Helmers is on the bulldozer)



Read more about the project here: www.uaf.edu/news/construction-begins-on-new-ski-trail.php

The project stemmed out of a plan put forth by Benjamin Buck, Benjamin Buck

assistant coach of Nanook women's and men's skiing. You can see the original proposal here.

<https://tinyurl.com/53d5eymt>

SKARLAND & PEARL CREEK PARK TRAIL USERS

Stan Justice

June 1

Kudos to Mike Schmoker and Dave Pruzak for help moving dirt to fill the two thermokarst dips on the Skarland Trail near Kingfisher Rd. Ice wedges are slowly melting out causing the trail to sink.

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & REC

May 30

Tanana River Recreation Access Improvements Project construction resumes June 3, 2024! Work will be focused on South Lathrop Street Extension. Parking lots and park roads should not experience any closures as of now. Please keep a lookout for onsite signage about closures, flaggers, and heavier traffic on the park roads. For the most up to date information about closures and construction progress updates, visit the FNSB Parks and Recreation Ongoing Project Page or FHWA Project Page. We will post newsletters periodically throughout the summer to provide updates on areas affected by construction.

Thank you for your patience!

For more information, visit the links below:

- <https://fnsb.gov/1005/Ongoing-Projects>
- <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ak/fnsb-tanana-1>

FAIRBANKS CYCLE CLUB

June 3

If you know about the Rabbit Trail between Old Murphy Dome Road and Moose Mountain Road, then you probably know the upper part of it has been very difficult to traverse due to large trees that have fallen across it. Well, we've been told those trees have been cleared! Thanks to the volunteer trail workers!

INTERIOR ALASKA LAND TRUST

June 29

We're working hard to clean up our new parcel off of Miller Hill! Still lots to do, but the original crossing of the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail will be ready for the winter! Thanks to the volunteers who lent a hand today and a big thanks again to Jack and Carol Wilbur and everyone who donated to make this acquisition happen. We ❤️ Goldstream!



INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Denali community celebrates Antler Creek Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/2fcyx99m>
- Construction Begins for World-Class Ski Trail Project on UAF Campus: <https://tinyurl.com/4j3prnb7>
- Application for Temporary Closure of One Half Mile of RST 1931 and RST 644 Near Ft. Knox Mine: <http://notice.alaska.gov/215881>
- BLM announced emergency closure of western portion of the White Mountains National Recreation Area due to wildland fire activity: <https://tinyurl.com/y6verhzy>
- A Beaver Creek Float (and Hike) with the Family: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2kzj73>

DO GOOD FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS WHILE OUT USING THE TRAILS

REPORT When you are out enjoying the trails, remember that you can be a force of good. That starts by acting responsibly: respect private property, don't shortcut switchbacks, keep your dog under control, be quiet around homes. But you can do more than that. You can also be the eyes and ears for the community.

If you see a problem with a trail, a problem with wildlife, or something suspicious, please report it.

Trail apps sometimes have a way to report an issue with the trail. For example, with OuterSpatial (<https://www.outerspatial.com/>), which is used by several agencies in Alaska, users can report issues on specific trails. (See "How can I explore specific Trail information?": <https://tinyurl.com/mk4je4hm>)

- Wildlife related problem? Report that to Alaska Fish and Game: <https://tinyurl.com/3e9nfv7y>
- Related to crime or public safety? Report it to the Alaska State Troopers online or via texting: <https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Home>

STATEWIDE

SEEN RECENTLY ON STATEWIDE FACEBOOK PAGES

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME - OFFICIAL

June 19

Attention Trail Users!

🏃 Runners moving quickly and quietly, may find themselves between a sow bear and her cubs.

🚲 Cyclists bombing along single-track trails may abruptly find themselves crashing into protective 800-pound cow moose.

🎣 And anglers accessing their favorite fishin' hole might find themselves on the same trail as some of the best fishers around 🐻🐻🐻.

Give wildlife plenty of space and time to move away as you travel the trails this summer.

👏 Make plenty of noise so wildlife know where you are.

🚦 Slow down when visibility is poor due to brush and around running water.

🐕 Keep pets on a leash to minimize the risk of conflicts with wildlife.

To learn more about living with bears, go to www.alaskabears.alaska.gov



STATEWIDE LINKS

- Alaska 'data bike' proposal aims to reform how DOT assesses its sidewalks and trails: <https://tinyurl.com/3az6zm78>
- OPINION: What it would mean for the Alaska Long Trail to be a National Scenic Trail: <https://tinyurl.com/2xy8seww>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Best advice for staying safe outdoors? Alaskans share their tips: <https://tinyurl.com/cz8j7dbv>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

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/>
- Conservation VIP newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/ycx9kfh5>

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 (deadlines June 21): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>
- 2024 Trails Capacity Program Awardees Announced (incl Alaska Trails): <https://tinyurl.com/eayxury6>
- Clif Family Foundation grants (for groups; ddlines March 1, August 1): <https://tinyurl.com/5bku286n>

OTHER LINKS:

- Secretary Haaland Designates Four New National Recreation Trails: <https://tinyurl.com/mr48xbbt>
 - The Trail Partnership Research Project Final Report: <https://tinyurl.com/xwvy66s7>
 - Proposed mountain biking system sparks tension in Oregon's dairy capital: <https://tinyurl.com/tprtsn36>
 - Apple iOS 18 Will Allow Satellite Texting for U.S. Users: <https://tinyurl.com/yrzam47s>
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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.