

ACTION UPDATE

May 2017

INTERIORWIDE

STATE CUTS CAUSE CLOSURE OF DELTA AREA PARK FACILITIES

Most Delta Junction area state park facilities will be closed starting July 1 if proposed state budget cuts take place.

Land- and water-based trails associated with those facilities will remain open, but the trails will be affected by the cuts, according to Brooks Ludwig, superintendent of northern



region parks. The main impact on trails will be the limited places for camping.

Camping facilities to be closed include Big Delta State Historical Park, Clearwater State Recreation Site, Delta State Recreation Site, Donnelly Creek State Recreation Site, Fielding Lake State Recreation Area, and Quartz Lake State Recreation Area.

“We will try to contract out Clearwater, Quartz Lake, Delta, and Big Delta State Historical Parks but if no one bids on the contract those sites will go to passive management, like Olnes Pond where the facilities are boarded up, furniture removed, people will still be able to access the site, but there will be no management,” Ludwig wrote in an email. Ludwig does expect a contractor to take over Quartz Lake, charging for boat launch, day use, and camping fees.

The boat ramp for the Clearwater River, a popular “blue” trail, will remain open, according to Ludwig. However, the campground at the Clearwater State Recreation Site, which is adjacent to the ramp, would remain closed—as would other state campgrounds in the area—if no contractor takes the job. This would make multi-day trips more difficult or expensive (if people choose to stay at a hotel). The Clearwater River is popular for fishing and for float trips to Clearwater Lake or to the Tanana River to its confluence with the Delta River. Also, a new day-use fee will be charged at the site, along with other sites in the interior (see “day-use fees” link in Interiorwide Links).

The boat ramps at Fielding and Quartz lakes will remain open, though the bathroom next to the Fielding Lake ramp will be locked.

The land-based trails at Quartz Lake State Recreation Area will remain open and receive some maintenance, according to Ludwig.

“We try to run our trail crew down to Quartz Lake every spring to log out the trails,” Ludwig wrote in an email. “As long as we keep getting the RTGP funding (Recreational Trails

Program grants) we will continue to do that. That will be the extent of trail maintenance. We will not pursue funding for trail projects in the Delta Area as we do not have the staff to oversee those projects.”

The Citizens Advisory Board of the Northern Parks Region has written to Senator Pete Kelly, president of the Alaska Senate, asking that funding for the Delta Junction area park facilities be put back in the budget. In trying to deal with the current state budget crisis, the Senate is proposing large state budget cuts. The House is proposing fewer cuts, instead instituting an income tax and raising oil taxes. Both sides agree, at least in principal, that the Permanent Fund needs to be restructured to help pay for the large budget deficit.

People wanting to comment on the cuts should contact their state legislators at: <http://w3.akleg.gov/index.php> (If you don't know who your legislators are, use the "Who Represents Me?" box in the lower right corner of the page.)

For more information on the cuts see this News-Miner story: <http://tinyurl.com/l9jfmvq>
(Photo by Eric Troyer of the lookout at the end of Bluff Point Trail, one of several land-based trails in the Quartz Lake State Recreation Site.)

REMEMBER TO LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD ON BORO BUDGET

This month the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly will be taking public comment on the borough budget. This is an opportunity to speak up for trails (among other things). The public hearing on the budget is set for Thursday, May 4. If enough people want to testify, the hearing might be held over to Thursday, May 11. People have three minutes to speak, though that can go longer if any assembly members or the mayor have questions. If you can't make the meeting, you can always email or call the Assembly members:

<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/assembly/Pages/Assembly-Members.aspx>

Fairbanks Borough Mayor has already submitted his budget. It can be found at:

<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/Documents/2018RecBudget.pdf> (5.8MB). The Parks and Recreation section starts on page 431.

LAND TRUST PLANS GOLDSTREAM, CRIPPLE CREEK PROJECTS

The Interior Alaska Land Trust has two new trail projects, one in Goldstream Valley and one along Cripple Creek, near Chena Pump Road.

The group has contracted Jon Underwood, owner of Happy Trails, Inc., "to build a walking/skiing trail around the back of the Peat Ponds, off Sheep Creek/Goldstream Road," according to Seth Adams, a trust board member.

The project will require "a couple of volunteer work parties to hand finish the trail and clean up the mess that the dozer will make," Adams wrote in an email. Dates haven't been set for the work parties, but they will be reported in this newsletter or interested people can contact the trust (web address below).

The group is also applying for a National Park Service grant to "help us plan trail facilities on our Cripple Creek property, to hopefully improve recreation possibilities on those trails," Adams wrote. The property is on the right side as you drive Chena Pump Road away from town.

For more information on the group see its website at: <https://interioraklandtrust.org>

SPRING TRAILS ARE VULNERABLE, PLEASE USE WITH CARE

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 really 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.

Early season damage of trails is a recurring problem. Many people are chomping at the bit to get outside once the snow melts. And some people love to get as muddy as they can while out 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. A little more damage probably won't make a big difference, but a trail in nice shape can be damaged for a season in a hurry.



One 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. However, do be careful to follow the rules of the road.

(A special note to those using Ester Dome Road: Please remember to run, bike or hike single file when cars pass. Also, the road has a couple of blind corners. Act as if a car will come barreling around the corner at any second. It just may.)

Another alternative is to sign up for one of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game outdoor skills classes: <http://tinyurl.com/lm4aorj>

(Eric Troyer photo of Stiles Creek Trail in the Chena River State Recreation Area, before the trail was rerouted and hardened)

NEW WHITE MOUNTAINS NRA MAP FOR MOBILE DEVICES RELEASED

A new map of the White Mountains National Recreation Area is among a set of maps BLM Alaska recently released for use on mobile devices. These maps should work fine when you're outside cell coverage once you've installed a georeferenced map application on your mobile device. For instructions and access to the White Mountains map and others, visit <https://www.blm.gov/maps/georeferenced-PDFs>.

(From BLM-White Mountains National Recreation Area Facebook page)

CLOSED TRAILS IN CHENA RIVER SRA TO OPEN BY LATE MAY

Several trails in the Chena River State Recreation Area were closed on April 26 to all uses except walking. The seasonal closures allow the trails to thaw and water to disperse without disturbance.

The Angel Creek Hillside, Compeau and Stiles trails will reopen May 26 or sooner depending on conditions. The South Fork, Colorado Creek, East Fork, Yukon Quest Winter and Angel Creek Valley Trails are winter trails and will remain closed to motorized use during the summer. Other trails in the recreation area were not included in the closure.

Violations of the trail closures can be reported to Alaska State Parks during business hours at 451-2695. On evenings and weekends, contact Alaska State Troopers and they will contact Alaska State Park rangers.

For more information see: <http://tinyurl.com/m4xdysb>

APPLICATIONS DUE FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSISTANCE

Could the National Park Service help in your community to create close-to-home recreation opportunities and protect nearby nature?

Apply by June 30 to be considered for technical assistance with your locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation project. The community assistance specialists in our Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program can help you to:

- Increase access to outdoor recreation and the natural world;
- Improve community health with new opportunities for more active living;
- Promote conservation and encourage stewardship of local resources;
- Benefit the local economy by improving quality of life;
- Connect youth to the outdoors and engage the next generation of conservation stewards; and
- Build partnerships that support your project's success!



To find out if we can help your community, review the application process. Then call or email our staff member nearest you to discuss your idea. We want to talk with you informally before you apply, to explore and develop your project idea and help you make the best of your application. Please let us know by the end of May if you intend to submit an application.

Still need help deciding to do something great in your community with our help? Watch this short video: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/multimedia.htm>

Applications are due by June 30. For more information:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>

(From NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program email; photo of RTCA program manager Paul Clark talking with Joe Hall about the newly rerouted portion of the Middle Fork Trail near Anchorage from RTCA webpage: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1005/index.htm>)

LAKE AND TRAIL FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE TANANA LAKES REC AREA

The Fairbanks Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting a Lake and Trail Festival, Saturday, June 10, at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Non-Motorized Boat Launch. Our partners will provide paddling instruction in canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards throughout the day (pre-registration required). There will be many family oriented outdoor games, activities and classes. The Summer Trails Challenge will be unveiled too! For more information keep an eye on the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department website (<http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/pr/pages/default.aspx>) or its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Fairbanks-North-Star-Borough-Parks-Rec-285026928325274/>) or call at 459-1070.

(From the FNSB Parks and Recreation Department website)

ALASKA TRAILS HAS TOOL TRAILER READY FOR 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).

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Grant applications for the state Snowmobile Trails Program are now available. Public notice for applications must be posted by June 10. Grant applications must be submitted or postmarked by July 1.

This program, administered by the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, provides reimbursable, matching grant funds for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use. The program also provides funds for snowmobile safety and educational programs.

Matching funds are not required for safety and educational grant programs. Grant funds are generated from annual registration fees paid to the state by snowmobile owners statewide. For more information on the Snowmobile Trails Grant Program and the Grooming Pool, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/q33aj9m>

For general grant questions regarding the program please contact the Grants Administrator (907/269-8709). For project development questions please contact the State Trails Coordinator (907/269- 8699). Or contact either one through the Department of Natural Resources email page (<http://tinyurl.com/3umsvj5>).

INTERIOR TRAILS QUARTERLY ACTION UPDATE

MAY 2017

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY COMING UP THE FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE

National Trails Day is happening June 3. As of the end of April there were five National Trails Day events registered for Alaska from Kenai to Tok to Fairbanks. More are welcome! If you are interested in leading or organizing an event, visit www.nationaltrailsday.org for information on how to host an event, where to register an event, and how to subscribe for updates. National Trails Day is the country's largest celebration of trails. Events will take place in every state across the country and will include hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more.

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 a PDF document with more information and recommended time periods for avoiding vegetation clearing see: <http://tinyurl.com/kwubruc>

FREE GUIDE HAS IDEAS FOR RECREATING OUTSIDE WITH A FAMILY

Gear up for summer with help from the Family-Friendly Outdoor Recreation Guide! The guide is full ideas and helpful hints on where and how to recreate in Interior Alaska, your family is sure to get the best out of summer.

Pick up a free guide at the Alaska Centers - Fairbanks, located inside of the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center. (<https://www.facebook.com/Morris-Thompson-Cultural-and-Visitors-Center-225017977526267/>)

(From the Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaCentersFairbanks>*)*

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- Rozell to revisit a hiking dream across Alaska, 20 years later: <http://tinyurl.com/lj2psn9>
- Reel Paddling Film Festival 2017, Fairbanks (May 4): <http://tinyurl.com/kpg898p>
- State institutes day-use fees for Chena Rec Area, other Interior sites: <http://tinyurl.com/ltg386c>
- User fees to be added to over a dozen Interior State Park facilities: <http://tinyurl.com/lk5y5vc>
- Fairbanks Paddlers' Annual Chena River Clean Up – May 10: <http://tinyurl.com/mrwxh2r>
- An ATV trails brochure for the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Site is now available for download on the website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/northern/lrchatrivsra.htm>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Inspired by the Quest: Polish ultrarunner completes journey from Whitehorse to Fairbanks: <http://tinyurl.com/m8hrb9h>
- Ambler Road access project scoping period extended: <http://tinyurl.com/meuksdg>

STATEWIDE

STATE PARKS POSITIONS INCLUDE TRAIL DUTIES

Alaska State Parks is looking for seasonal employees and volunteers. Positions include trail crew and backcountry ranger assistant. Applicants must be at least 18 years old.

- For more information on the volunteer program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/index.htm>
- For more information on Alaska State Parks seasonal jobs see: <http://tinyurl.com/7mog8q3>

RIVER FORECAST SITE KEEPS TRACK OF SNOW DEPTH



The National Weather Service's River Forecast Center has a website that tracks snow depths at many locations across the state. In the spring, summer, and fall, the site also tracks several things regarding rivers, including how breakup is going and what river conditions are like. See the website at: <http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/>

STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Eagle Watch, State Parks (several recent issues have had trail-related stories): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatcharchive>
- Alaska Nordic Skier newsletter (several recent issues have had trail-related stories): <http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/newsletter/>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Hiking maps go mobile: Feds unveil digital backcountry guides: <http://tinyurl.com/nybj6mt>
- National Geographic Just Named These Two Alaska Trails The Best In The World: <http://tinyurl.com/lj3nyko>
- New day use and entrance fees to be implemented at state parks: <http://tinyurl.com/ma8kkno>
- 2016 National Recreation Trails Photo Contest Winners (two from Alaska): <http://tinyurl.com/kkxalm2>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Why 'Parker's Trail' is the best 3 hours of Alaska reality TV you're missing: <http://tinyurl.com/kcs6jrv>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Noise and light pollution: <http://tinyurl.com/n45jq5t>

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game Outdoor Camps and Skills Clinics: <http://tinyurl.com/lm4aorj>
- When bikers collide with bears: <http://tinyurl.com/kscaqfg>
- Reducing the impact of invasive elodea on fisheries: <http://tinyurl.com/ltyr746>
- Inspire Alaska outdoor discovery with kids early on: <http://tinyurl.com/m8rgq5n>

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- As Alaska melts, here's how to enjoy the soggy outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/n8vrgzk>
- (Anchorage) Parks Bond—Proposition 3—passed: <http://tinyurl.com/jw2cn6h>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Mountain biking in Eagle River and the Mat-Su: <http://tinyurl.com/kgv5d3n>
- As spring blossoms, Boating season beckons: <http://coast-magazine.com/back-in-the-paddle>
- APU student seeks public input about popular Anchorage park: <http://tinyurl.com/n8zhr5d>
- New Hillside singletrack trails OK'd by (Anchorage) Parks and Rec board: <http://tinyurl.com/m5g2hxx>
- (Kodiak) Termination Point Community Celebration, June 2, includes hike: <http://tinyurl.com/lrx79t>
- State, Eklutna agree to keep trails to Knik Glacier and river open to the public: <http://tinyurl.com/lqtmeb4>
- Another 6 to 8 miles of Hillside singletrack bike trails to be built this summer: <http://tinyurl.com/ky6eyto>
- Another Anchorage footbridge collapses, this one on the Campbell Creek trail: <http://tinyurl.com/mmwfb8h>
- Campbell Creek Trail Bridge Rehabilitation webpage: <http://tinyurl.com/nxogldu>
- Residents asked to stay off muddy Anchorage trails during spring breakup: <http://tinyurl.com/lu8333r>

SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Sitka Trail Works Spring 2017 newsletter: <http://sitkatrailworks.org/news/>
- Juneau's mix of history, scenery and hiking trails makes it a great family destination: <http://tinyurl.com/n6znerx>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

PRESIDENT TRUMP WANTS TO TRIM TRAIL-RELATED PROGRAM

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is coming under more heat given the fact that the Trump Administration has recommended cutting the program's budget in FY 2018 from \$247 million to \$127 million. In response, more than 200 members of Congress have sent a letter to

the House Appropriations Committee urging more robust funding than what the President is seeking.

(From Americans for Responsible Recreational Access: <http://www.arra-access.com>; for more on recent fights regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund see the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition news: <http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/in-the-news.html>)

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/Calendar.html

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Rails to Trails Conservancy enews (April): <http://tinyurl.com/m77pptc>
- American Trails (May): <http://tinyurl.com/kmfv5gz>

FUNDING

- National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program (deadline June 26): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

TRAIL GUIDES

- 4 best little-known trails to hike in Kansas this spring: <http://tinyurl.com/l5r3wtq>
- 13 Bike Trails To Cycle Through (New Jersey) This Spring: <http://tinyurl.com/mvgk4d5>
- Best easy walking trails along San Francisco's bayshore: <http://tinyurl.com/m8ep5bq>
- Discover Davis County's (Utah) Top 10 Hiking Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/l9eno5v>
- Check This Map of 10 Metro-Accessible Running Trails in Washington (D.C.): <http://tinyurl.com/klh9jjm>
- 13 Southern Hiking Trails That Go the Distance: www.southernliving.com/travel/hiking-trails

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- "Story Maps" Use Technology To Create New Tool Promoting OHV (and other) Recreation: <http://tinyurl.com/l83bzb2>
- The 11 Best American Hiking Trails Near Breweries: <http://tinyurl.com/lwadah8>
- Why Spring Is the Time to Take Your Workout Outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/l67mwmj>
- Five Steps To Enjoy National Forests On Off-Highway Vehicles: <http://tinyurl.com/ltml8lc>
- TomTom Will Now Help You Find Uncrowded National Park Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/mp6qbj2>
- 5 Traverse City Trails For Great Northern Michigan Hiking: <http://tinyurl.com/n2htogw>
- National Get Outdoors Day (June 10): <http://www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org>
- Spiked trails in Sylva, N.C., lead to domestic terrorism bill: <http://tinyurl.com/kxvqg7r>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- London's best-kept secret for walkers – and five more trails to explore this spring: <http://tinyurl.com/l3gn8go>
- South to Patagonia (volunteer opportunity): <http://tinyurl.com/mau7244>
- These 10 Hiking Trails Will Blow Your Mind: <http://tinyurl.com/mob7u4t>
- 5 Common Misconceptions About (Canada's) Great Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/mmpbtvj>
- Your guide to hiking around Hong Kong's Lion Rock: <http://tinyurl.com/n4pa8xp>

SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Discovering Bigfoots on North Bonneville trails: <http://tinyurl.com/llrwas4>
- National Park Service Receives Gift from President Trump: www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3671

Interior Trails Quarterly is a free email newsletter that comes out four times a year: March, June, September, and December. ITQ Action Updates come out once a month in between regular editions of the ITQ. Both are 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 also be used in the statewide Alaska Trails newsletter.

DISCLAIMER: Interior Trails Quarterly and ITQ Action Updates are not products of any organization. However, I am a board member of the Interior Trails Preservation Coalition, a member of several interior trail user groups, and a member of Alaska Trails and editor of its newsletter.