

ACTION UPDATE

October 2017

INTERIORWIDE

BLM PLANS OHV MANAGEMENT CHANGES IN WHITE MOUNTAINS

You may have heard that the BLM is planning on making several changes in its management of Off-Highway Vehicles, including designation of several trails for use by Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs, also called "Side-by-Sides"). Implementing new rules will take up to a year and will include publication of proposed rules in the Federal Register, a 30-day public comment period, public hearings, and publication of final rules. In the meantime, the rules we have had for many years remain in effect. That means Side-by-Sides, (which exceed 1,500 pounds gross vehicle weight rating) are allowed only on the US Creek Road, Nome Creek Road, and Nome Creek placer mining tailings within the White Mountains National Recreation Area. We've recently updated our georeferenced PDF map of the White Mountains (26.0 MB; <http://tinyurl.com/yatuug4o>) as well as our Off-Highway Vehicle Use Areas map (PDF, 1.1 MB; <http://tinyurl.com/ybas8z4w>) for the White Mountains and Steese areas to make this clearer. As always, if you'd like more information, please call or visit us in Fairbanks.

(From BLM White Mountains Trails Conditions page: <http://tinyurl.com/ycp8raq3>)

UAF ALUMNI GROUP DONATES TO TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A trail cutting across the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus recently got an upgrade thanks to the nonprofit UAF Alumni Association.

The Himalayan Trail runs across a wooded slope behind the Patty Center/Ice Arena/Student Recreation Center complex and connects the top of the sledding hill with the parking lot off Ambler Lane. For years the trail was a narrow singletrack cut into the slope of the hill.

In fall 2016 the university improved the trail including widening it, installing benches and a picnic table along its route, adding woodchips, and installing signs on either end. UAF Trails Manager Jason Garron and members of the UAF grounds crew did the work. The alumni association board donated \$10,000 for the project.

"All of the gifts the board gives from its fundraising efforts are aimed at enhancing campus and student life, so this trail really was a good fit," according to Kate Ripley, executive director of the association.



Darrin "Bear" Edson, superintendent of UAF Operations, is happy the alumni association was interested in funding the project.

"This trail is very heavily used by students traveling from lower campus to the west ridge on a daily basis. We have always had an improvement project in mind for the trail, it however always was pushed to the side for higher priority projects," Edson wrote in an email. "My crew really enjoyed the project."

The origin of the trail is shady. Rumor has it that the trail was put in 8-10 years ago as a pirate trail after several failed attempts to get official approval for a trail, possibly going as far back as the 1960s.

"The trail, as far as I know, has always been a route taken to get from Lower Campus to the West Ridge. There may be some history connected to it that I am not aware of, I just know it's been there for a very long time and it is used daily," Edson wrote.

According to Stan Justice, president of the University Trails Club, the university hired a pedestrian transportation consultant a few years ago who found the trail and gave it the name. The consultant recommended at time that the trail be upgraded.

POST ASKS FOR SAFETY, RESPECT WHEN DRIVING ESTER DOME ROAD

Ester Dome is a popular place to spend time on trails, but sometimes our excitement to drive to the trailhead makes us forget our driving can affect people living along Ester Dome Road. I found this polite post by Karen Jensen on the Fairbanks Area Hiking Club Fan Page. It's a good reminder for all Ester Dome trail users who drive on Ester Dome Road. (The LNT at the end refers to the Leave No Trace outdoor use ethic.):

I would like to make a polite request to all of you who hike the Ester Dome Road trails, including the marathon trail, single track, top of the dome trails etc.

I live on Ester Dome, along with many young families with small children, families with teens, and some elderly people as well. The Dome has many people living along the road, and the road has many users, bikers, joggers, runners, baby strollers, old folks using walkers, dog walkers, mushers. The speed limit is 35mph, and going faster than the posted speed on an unmarked two way gravel road without shoulders and with lots of sharp turns, is dangerous to all. The road also gets slick this time of year, with early morning frosts, fog, and rain.

We also have plenty of moose - had three in my yard the other afternoon - foxes, coyotes, birds, and bears, any of which may run in front of your vehicle.

Please, drive at a reasonable rate, paying attention to the road ahead, so that we can all stay safe. As a long time resident, I welcome everyone who wants to use our fabulous trails. It's a great place to live and will stay that way if everyone practices safe driving and LNT. Thank you!

RTP GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE IN MID-OCTOBER

Grant applications for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) must be submitted by October 15. The timeline is different than it has been in past years.

All application and informational documents have are available at:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

RTP grants provide reimbursable, matching funds to develop and repair recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Grants are also available for trail-related environmental protection, safety, and educational projects.

Anyone with questions about RTP grants may contact Darcy Harris at 907-269-8699 or darcy.harris@alaska.gov.

(From Alaska Department of Natural Resources press release)

LAND TRUST BUILDS SUMMER TRAIL AT GOLDSTREAM PEAT PONDS

The Interior Alaska Land Trust (IALT) has built a new summer trail at the Goldstream peat ponds near the intersection of Goldstream and Murphy Dome roads. Here's an IALT Facebook post about the project:

Another work party at the Peat Ponds is in the books! This time, a fantastic volunteer crew built and installed 4 benches: 2 skating benches down by the ponds and a bench at each end of the newly established summer trail. A huge thank you to Christopher Baird, Sam Dashevsky, and IALT founding member Martha Reynolds for their hard work! These benches were made possible through a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation.

CONSIDER PLANNING AN EVENT FOR WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

International Walk to School Day is October 4. On this day, thousands of kids, parents, teachers, and community members participate in Walk to School Day to support walking and its many benefits for physical and mental health, the economy, environment, and community. Here are ideas and resources for building momentum in your community in the last week leading up to Walk to School Day:



- Start a Walking School Bus program at your school to welcome families to the world of walking to school. Our step-by-step guide outlines how to plan and implement a walking school bus for your school, and includes proven tools, tips and resources for a fast and easy start: <http://tinyurl.com/y7mxmpjg>
- Register your event at walkbiketoschool.org to ensure your activities are counted as part of the nationwide movement for walking and bicycling.

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- \$1.6 million Birch Hill bike path under construction: <http://tinyurl.com/yafpjsrj>
- Conservation rewritten? (opinion re Creamer's Field): <http://tinyurl.com/y75ryrgs>
- FNSB Parks and Rec Fall Activity Guide (download): <http://tinyurl.com/yc8ws4o3>

- Nome Creek Valley: Fairbanks' Million-Acre Backyard (video): <http://tinyurl.com/ybsvu8fk>
- Charlie Dome is a good day hike now that it's hot springs season: <http://tinyurl.com/yacza9g4>
- Volunteers finish restoring popular Fairbanks trail after offroaders demolish land (*great story but please note that the trail is not yet opened to public use*): <http://tinyurl.com/yb2eba7o>

STATEWIDE

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>

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Enjoy the trails, avoid conflicts: It's that time of year when the outdoors sees a greater variety of users: <http://tinyurl.com/y7khy2xw>
- Atigun River to Sagavanirktok a challenging float: <http://tinyurl.com/y7eg7s43>
- Defending Alaska's historic use of trails: Klutina Lake case will tell us more about the Walker administration's views: <http://tinyurl.com/y87two56>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show:
 - Backcountry babies: <http://tinyurl.com/y9ylwwd3>
 - Fat bike and packraft adventurers: <http://tinyurl.com/ycwtwp85>
 - Ski trail preparation: <http://tinyurl.com/ya5499es>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Bikes and bears? Ride on, friends: <http://tinyurl.com/yccpnbsw>
- Traversing the Brooks Range, step by revealing step: <http://tinyurl.com/yd9ttyo6>
- A little fear goes a long way on solo backcountry adventures: <http://tinyurl.com/ybown9by>
- Outdoor recreation an economic engine (opinion): <http://tinyurl.com/y9jyp7zw>
- How to load a backpack so you don't lose stuff along the trail: <http://tinyurl.com/y9h5cl87>
- Here's how one program is trying to get every kid into a park: <http://tinyurl.com/ybposbtf>
- As Alaska trail temperatures plummet, remember: You can't drink ice through a straw: <http://tinyurl.com/y8bdlffs>
- Heidi Hansen to serve as DNR deputy commissioner: <http://tinyurl.com/ycad74zf>

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- New singletrack trails spell sudden encounters with bears (opinion): <http://tinyurl.com/y959vqeh>
- Ahtna rejects settlement in Klutina Lake Road suit: <http://tinyurl.com/yayxjg7q>

- Trial back on in Klutina Lake Road case after Ahtna nixes settlement: <http://tinyurl.com/ydhqtbc3>
- Castner Glacier is a beautiful trek in the fall: <http://tinyurl.com/yclpzgkv>
- Mat-Su Trails and Park Foundation next grant cycle due date is January 5: <http://matsutrails.org/our-grants/>
- Notice of Adopted Changes to the Regulations on the Use and Management of the Knik River Public Use Area (includes trail-related sections): <http://notice.alaska.gov/187019>
- New Smokey's Track completed in Willow: <http://tinyurl.com/yb8lehqe>
- Summer youth crew tackles the trails: <http://tinyurl.com/ybf75ek7>
- Intro to Matanuska Greenbelt (Wed, Oct 11): <http://tinyurl.com/y8lebepz>
- The Bomber Traverse Map: <http://winterbear.com/maps/bomber-traverse-map/>
- A completely new view of a familiar scene atop Matanuska Peak: <http://tinyurl.com/y9se97sg>
- Ignore those bruises. Just an Alaska mountain-biking trip gone bad: <http://tinyurl.com/y8drlgvr>
- Homer Prop 1 would allow using HART for roads, trails maintenance: <http://tinyurl.com/y8ggcq7q>
- Island Trails Network newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/y9phjco5>
- Construction of South End Park turnpike (Facebook post): <http://tinyurl.com/y8pxldue>

NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL APPLICATIONS DUE SOON

Some applications for designating a trail as a National Recreation Trail are due by November 1.



For trails on private, city, county, or state land, or on federal land NOT overseen by the Department of Agriculture, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Those applications are due on November 1 of each year.

For trails on National Forests, National Grasslands, and National Recreation Areas and associated lands, the designation process goes through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Those may be submitted anytime, but must be submitted by February 15 to be included in publicity with DOI designations each June.

For more about applying see:

www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/ApplyNRT.html

TRAILS GROUP SEEKS NEW MEMBERS AFTER TRAILS FUNDING FIGHT

Coalition for Recreational Trails is seeking new members after a recent amendment was passed that the coalition feels would harm federal trail funding. According to a joint statement from the coalition and the American Recreation Coalition:

"Rep. Rob Woodall (R-GA) has introduced a harmful amendment to the House appropriations bill that would allow states to recall all unused federal funding from trails, walking, and biking – which would include Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding. According to CRT Co-Chair Marianne Fowler, "When Congress passed the FAST Act in 2015, they also included a fiscally responsible provision to take back funds that states did not use. These 'recalls' are proportional: if 10 percent of a state's unused funding is from walking and biking, then those funds should make up 10 percent of what a state sends back. In the past, the recall has also excluded funds passed down to regions and local communities." Rep. Woodall's amendment changes that approach, allowing states to target all unused funding for trails, walking and biking.

*** Sept. 8, 2017 Update: The amendment passed by a voice vote. Rep. Woodall during his House floor time stated, "What this amendment would do is allow our local Departments of Transportation, our State Department of Transportation, maximum flexibility in meeting this Federal mandate to rescind those \$800 million worth of unobligated funds." In opposition, Rep. Price (D-NC) said "The set-asides in the bill reflect the agreement in the FAST Act. Therefore, before legislating on this, we need to be clear about how this would work and whether it does, in fact, violate the premises of the FAST Act and other questions raised by our colleagues."*

Find out more about Coalition for Recreational Trails here:

<http://www.americantrails.org/rtp/crt.html>

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN TRAILS ON YOUR SPRING BREAK

Are you a college student looking to make a difference over your spring break? Alternative Breaks are volunteer trail stewardship projects in America's parks and provide college student groups the opportunity to connect with nature, meet people with like-minded interests, and have a truly memorable vacation! For more info:

<https://volunteervacations.americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/alternative-break/>

(From Paperless Trail, the American Hiking Society e-newsletter)

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

TRAIL GUIDES

- 3 easy, year-round hiking trails near Denver: <http://tinyurl.com/yb8yp9z7>
- These are some of Colorado's longest trails: <http://tinyurl.com/y6u63cpt>
- The D.C. area's best bike trails, mapped: <http://tinyurl.com/ycvhzjgu>
- 25 of Michigan's best-loved trails, ranked: <http://tinyurl.com/yac7zys3>

FUNDING

- IMBA'S National Grant Campaign (mountain biking): <https://www.imba.com/dig-in-grant>

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- Trails.com newsletter: <http://email.trails.com/q/1mPplcRKBYQfhwUZFqjo/wv>

RESEARCH

- Study: Promotion of active transportation among state departments of transportation in the U.S: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140516303668>
- 4 Scientific Reasons Why Kids Should Be Outdoors: <http://tinyurl.com/ybqvbgqm>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Philly becomes first U.S. city to map urban trails on Google Street View: <http://tinyurl.com/yd2kyltp>
- Best Hiking in the Catskills: 7 Scenic Trails to Waterfalls & Swimming Holes: <http://tinyurl.com/yaocc8yc>
- Could a 1,650-mile trail network connect New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut?: <http://tinyurl.com/yatof74m>
- 2017 National Recreation Trails photo contest (deadline December 15): <http://tinyurl.com/p5ku38v>
- Robert Moor gets you thinking about trails (book review): <http://tinyurl.com/ya4l2wgg>
- Paralyzed hiker conquers Appalachian and Pacific Crest trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yczk5dpz>
- Santa Cruz pays the “Oregon Trail Tax” to keep singletrack growing: <http://tinyurl.com/y9zdhyrq>
- How It Got Built: Nine Bike Projects, Nine Approaches: <http://peopleforbikes.org/how-it-got-built/>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- Canada Completes World’s Longest Hiking Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/ya8fpq9z>
- China’s Mars will feature zero gravity, hiking trails and an amusement park: <http://tinyurl.com/y9klu2k9>
- Walk on Water: Ireland's first floating boardwalk opens on Shannon: <http://tinyurl.com/ybug4qa>

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.