

# ACTION UPDATE

January 2018

## FAIRBANKS AREA

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### **AVALANCHE WORKSHOP TO BE HELD IN FAIRBANKS IN JANUARY**

The Alaska Avalanche Information Center will be presenting a two-day workshop in Fairbanks on January 20 and 21. The workshop consists of one 4-hour day of in-class presentation and one 4-hour day of outdoor, hands-on activities. This is a great deal with a limited number of spots, so respond early if interested.

The Jan 20 class covers a wide range of topics that are focused on backcountry safety. Each class includes information from avalanches to communication to water safety to wilderness medical and general survival.

The Jan 21 class is an expanded version of the classroom workshop with interactive hands-on activities to practice the skills taught.

Participants who complete both days will receive a free survival ice pick and thumb drive with a digital copy of the book *On Dangerous Ice*.

The workshop is sponsored by the Fairbanks Snow Travelers and Tired Iron. Class size is limited to 50 participants and pre-registration is required. The workshop participant cost is normally \$1,000 each, however, this training is being offered for \$20 each. Members of the Fairbanks Snow Travelers, with 2017/2018 membership dues paid, are entitled to one seat with a refund when they complete both days. Additional family members will need to pay the \$20 fee.

Contact John Johnston at [trails@snowtravelers.org](mailto:trails@snowtravelers.org) for additional information and reservations. Remember class size is limited, so register soon.

More information on understanding and identifying avalanche hazards at:

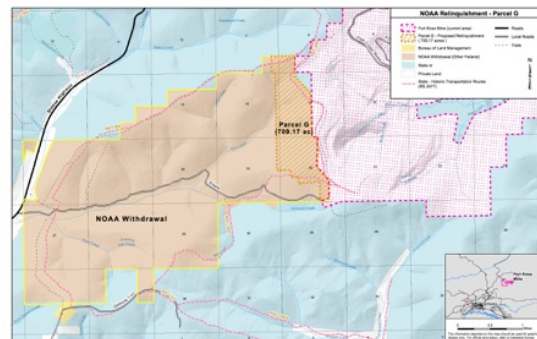
<http://tinyurl.com/ybn42ru6>

*(From Fairbanks Snow Travelers email)*

### **MINING COMPANY WANTS TO EXPAND IN AREA WITH TRAILS**

Kinross Fort Knox is interested in possibly expanding its operations to the west, a move that will likely affect trails in that area, especially a popular route used by the Gold Discovery Run.

The announcement came after a 709-acre parcel of land, named Parcel G, was formally transferred from federal to state ownership. The mine has been interested in the expanding in that direction for a while. The state is eager to help the



mine extend its life.

Trail advocates who are watching the activities closely are guardedly optimistic. Most say Kinross Fort Knox has been good to work with regarding trails. Plus, some of the trails, including those used by the Gold Discovery Run, are listed as RS2477 routes, which means they have legal right-of-way protections. However, it's not clear how the trails, especially the main route through the area, can be protected if the mine expands in that direction.

The trails are used year-round by a variety of trail users, including runners, mountain bikers, snowmachiners, ATVers, and mushers. People have had several opportunities to comment about the land transfer. A recent email from the Bureau of Land Management, which oversaw the land transfer, states that people with "questions and concerns about future management of Parcel G" should contact A.J. Wait, Permits and Easements Team Manager at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (907/451-2777; [aj.wait@alaska.gov](mailto:aj.wait@alaska.gov)). It wouldn't hurt for trail advocates to again voice their opinions on the issue.

For more information on the issue see:

- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story: Kinross acquires Gilmore tract west of Fort Knox: <http://tinyurl.com/y9faslxx>
- Kinross Fort Knox press release: Kinross acquires mining rights to land adjacent Fort Knox mine, adds more than 2 million ounces to mineral resource estimates: <http://tinyurl.com/y9cf4rf19>
- BLM's page for this project: <http://tinyurl.com/y9lpkzkm>

## **GROUP STARTS WORK ON INTERIOR TRAILS, PARKS FOUNDATION**

A group of trail advocates plans to start a trails and parks foundation for interior Alaska.

The group has been meeting regularly and has come up with a name—Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation—and mission and vision statements. While the group is made up of trail advocates, the group decided to include parks because many interior Alaska parks have a strong trails focus and are interconnected by trails. The group's main focus is currently the Fairbanks area, but it decided to encompass a wider region than the Fairbanks borough in its mission because of the many trails and parks beyond the borough that are popular with and have an impact on Fairbanks residents.

A lot of work still has to be done to form the foundation, including creation of bylaws, registering with the state, formation of the first board, and connecting with another group in Fairbanks that is planning a foundation to support the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department.

Mission and vision statements for the foundation are below. Anyone interested in helping with or finding out more about this effort should contact Eric Troyer ([fbxtrails@gmail.com](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com)). *(Note: Eric Troyer is also the editor of this newsletter.)*

- Mission: The Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation advocates to develop, maintain, and promote a year-round trails and parks system for the greater Fairbanks area and beyond. The foundation will promote cooperation between all users of trails and parks in our community.

- Vision: The Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation seeks to have:
  - An integrated and comprehensive trail and park system across Interior Alaska.
  - Communities that understand the importance of trails and parks for our physical, mental, and social health, and our economic and environmental well-being.
  - All users working together to promote, protect, maintain, and expand our trail and park system.

## **FAIRBANKSANS SHOULD REMIND MAYOR OF TRAIL BENEFITS**

Borough Mayor Karl Kassel and his administration are in the process of developing a budget for the next year. Please remind the mayor how important trails are to our community.

Trails bring many benefits that we sometimes take for granted, such as:

- Providing access to natural resources, such as game, berries, and the great outdoors.
- Improving the physical, mental, and social health of our citizens by helping to get people exercising outdoors, alone and with other people.
- Increasing tourism by providing a place for tourist-friendly events, such as the North American Sled Dog Championships and the Iron Dog Snowmachine Race, as well as giving visitors a place to enjoy the wild expanse of Alaska.
- Encouraging human-powered transportation, improving health and reducing car traffic.

Later in the year, the Fairbanks Borough Assembly will be presented with the budget and the public will have a chance to comment. However, it's beneficial to have the mayor provide a budget that recognizes the importance of trails. One way to do that is to make sure the Parks and Recreation Department has a healthy budget, especially one that continues to include a full-time trails coordinator. Contact the mayor by email (<http://tinyurl.com/ybvd4kpv>), phone (459-1300) or mail (PO Box 71267-1267; Fbx, AK 99701

## **MORE TRAILS WORK DONE THIS SUMMER IN CHENA RIVER REC AREA**

One trail is done in the Chena River State Recreation Area and one is getting closer to being completed. The Stiles Creek Extension, which connects the Stiles Creek Trail to mile 41.6 Chena Hot Springs Road is done. This is a year-round motorized, multiuse trail. The Mastadon Trail (incorrect spelling is accurate), a non-motorized multiuse trail that will provide year-round access to the North Fork Public Use Cabin, is still being worked on. Below is an email update from Brooks Ludwig, superintendent of the state parks northern area:

*We finished the Stiles Creek Extension this summer. The new trail is super smooth and a really nice ATV ride. We plowed the trailhead at mile 41.6 for winter access. Our groomer reported it was really hard to groom and that he had to unhook the groomer and just use his snow machine to clear the trail. His report was drifted and difficult sections on steep hillside. So perhaps it's not the best for winter ops.*

*The Mastadon Trail was cleared to approximately 8 ½ mile this season. We hope to secure funding to finish the trail next summer (fingers crossed). I asked for an exemption on the \$50,000 cap for non-motorized trails.*

## FAIRBANKS COMMISSION ASKS FOR TRAIL PROJECTS FUNDING

The Trails Advisory Commission for the Fairbanks North Star Borough has sent a list of trail projects it believes the mayor should include in the “Borough budget and in requests to the Governor and State Legislature for Legislative funding.” In general, the memo asks for several actions to benefit borough trails, including legal protections, mapping, signage, public education, and improvements. Specific projects in the memo are as follows:

- FNSB Trail Mapping, Signing, and Education Program
- 100-Mile Loop Trail: Rosie Creek Area: Acquire, Survey, Realign, Construction, and Signage  
Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail Hardening Project
- Skyline Ridge Trail Hardening, Access Control, and Signage
- Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail Hardening, Drainage Control, Bridge Installation, and Signage  
Farmer’s Mine Trail Extension: Acquire, Survey, Realign, Construction, and Signage
- K2 Bridge: Acquisition and Installation across Goldstream Creek near Ballaine Road

More detailed descriptions of the projects can be found at the end of the December 12, 2017, commission meeting packet: <http://tinyurl.com/ybcp94mk>

## FAIRBANKS FOLK SCHOOL OFFERS WILDERNESS FIRST AID COURSE

The Folk School will be offering a two-day Wilderness First Aid course the weekend of February 3-4, 2018. Deb Ajango will teach the course, a renowned Alaska instructor on the topics of risk management, emergency action planning, and wilderness medicine.

The course will introduce the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with accidents and injuries when 911 is not readily available. It will cover assessment and management of the scene, assessment and management of life-threatening conditions, assessment and management/treatment of traumatic injuries, and the appropriate patient care for each. You’ll learn decision-making as it relates to delayed transport. As a bonus, Deb will cover how to handle winter-specific injuries.



If you're interested, sign up soon to secure your spot in the class. All of the details are on the Wilderness First Aid course description page on The Folk School's Web site: [https://thefolkschoolfairbanks.org/event/wilderness-first-aid/?instance\\_id=10231](https://thefolkschoolfairbanks.org/event/wilderness-first-aid/?instance_id=10231).

*(From Fairbanks Folk School email)*

## FAIRBANKS AREA LINKS

- Share the trails Fairbanks: follow rules, use common: <http://tinyurl.com/yd7tanps>
- Trail was clear from North Pole to Cleary Summit: <http://tinyurl.com/ycbl5a66>
- Snow Travelers make me feel old on trail ride: <http://tinyurl.com/ydz4h2kt>
- Even with great conditions, climb up Compeau Trail is hard work: <http://tinyurl.com/yak8odyr>

- Northern Soundings radio show/podcast: Fairbanks Trails: Creators and Preservers: <http://tinyurl.com/y9ev26lk>
- Fairbanks Borough Winter/Spring Activity Guide: <http://tinyurl.com/ycloc3gf>
- Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge List 2017/18: <http://tinyurl.com/yc2yuobn>

## INTERIORWIDE/STATEWIDE

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### **HISTORIAN SEEKS INFORMATION ABOUT INLAND RIVER, LAKE USE**

People with experience using inland rivers and lakes from about 1945 to 1975 should contact historian Mark Rice with the Office of History and Archaeology. Please see his note below:

*I am a historian working for the State Department of Natural Resources, and one of the projects that I'm working on right now is a history of inland river and lake use around the time of Statehood (more broadly, ~1945-~1975). I'm looking to talk to people who have experience boating rivers and lakes around this time, in particular in small outboards, airboats, inflatables, and jet boats. If you have information or experience that might be helpful, or if you know someone who might, please feel free to contact me at [mark.rice@alaska.gov](mailto:mark.rice@alaska.gov) or 907-269-8712.*

*I appreciate your consideration, and look forward to hearing from anyone who might be interested.*

### **KEEP TRAILS IN THE PUBLIC EYE DURING TOUGH BUDGET TIMES**

The Alaska State Legislature will be meeting soon and the budget outlook is bleak. More cuts are being called for, as well as more revenues, such as taxes. Trail advocates need to speak loudly if trails are to be treated fairly. There are several ways trails could be affected.

- Staffing for the Recreational Trails Program could be cut, This would be a huge mistake as \$200,000 in state funding brings in more than \$1 million from the federal government (a 7-to-1 return), but that \$200,000 has been considered for the budget axe before.
- Staffing for the Department of Natural Resources could be cut. Very few people in state government work solely on trails, but many deal with trails as part of their jobs. If positions are cut, other duties may take precedence over trails.
- Pullouts along roads that offer parking for access to trailheads could see less maintenance, including snowplowing, as the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities focuses on keeping high-traffic roads clear.
- Direct state grants for trail projects could dry up.
- General grants to local governments could be reduced or cut altogether. That will have a ripple effect on all local government operations, including any that deal with trails.

So, what can trail advocates do? Let your voice be heard.

- Call or write your legislators. Our legislators will have many things vying for their

attention this session. If they don't hear from trail advocates they may think that trails are not important to Alaskans. Contact information for senators and representatives can be found at: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/>

- Call or write the governor: <http://gov.alaska.gov/Walker/contact/office-locations.html>
- Write an editorial or letter to the editor for your local newspaper.
- Have your trail-related group pass a resolution, then send that to the governor, and your legislators and local newspaper.

## USE "PICK. CLICK. GIVE." TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS



Alaska Trails is included in the Permanent Fund Dividend's "Pick. Click. Give" charitable contributions program. It's a secure and easy way to make a donation. When you file for your PFD online, you will be given an opportunity to donate using money from your PFD. If you do, please remember Alaska Trails.

If you use "Pick. Click. Give" you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it's you making the gift.

For more information on "Pick. Click. Give" see: [www.pickclickgive.org](http://www.pickclickgive.org)

To go directly to the Alaska Trails "Pick. Click. Give." page:  
<http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails>

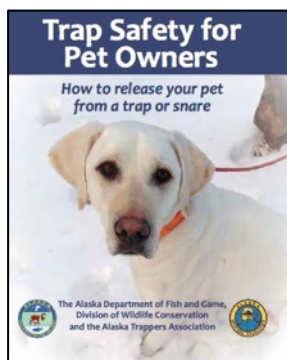
## SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2018 STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

Please mark your calendars now for the Alaska Trails annual Statewide Trails Conference, which will be held April 26-28 in Anchorage.

The group is looking forward to a robust and exciting conference. Alaska Trails would also like your input on topics and speakers that you would like to see at the conference. Please e-mail Alaska Trails at [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org) to share your ideas for the 2018 conference.

See more at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/358363531293740/>

## RESOURCES HELP REDUCE PET/TRAPPING CONFLICTS



Trapping season is here, so trail users who let their dogs run loose should make sure they know some basic information about traps and trap lines. A pamphlet and videos are available.

**PAMPHLET:** A pocket-sized pamphlet titled "Trap Safety for Pet Owners" describes the types of traps and snares that may be encountered and provides illustrated instructions on how to free pets swiftly and safely. It is produced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Alaska Trappers Association (ATA). Copies are available free of charge at department offices, or may be viewed on the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/m6oulhk>. More information, including

video footage featuring trap removal instructions, is found on the department's website at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) (see "Sharing the Trails" under the "Hunting > Trapping" dropdown menu), and on the ATA website ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).

**VIDEO:** The ATA also sells a 30-minute video, "Sharing Alaska's Trails," that includes information such as how to know if you are on a trap line, trap line safety, the physics of handling and opening traps and snares, and tips for first-aid for pets accidentally caught in traps. The video doesn't promote trapping, but deals with the practicalities of sharing the trails. A three-minute excerpt of the DVD can be found on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk242jZwEAQ)). To order a copy of the DVD check the ATA store ([www.alaskatrappers.org](http://www.alaskatrappers.org)).



Most trapping seasons run from November 1 to the end of February, but the season for a few species lasts longer. Wolf traps could be active well into April.

## 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 snow depth page for the website at: [http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/Snow\\_Depth](http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/Snow_Depth)

## BUY A PASS TO SUPPORT STATE AND FEDERAL PARKS

Please consider buying an annual park pass for Alaska State Parks or the National Park Service or both. It's a way to support parks during a time of tight state and federal budgets.

- Alaska State Parks annual pass: Permits are \$50 and, of course, your parking is then paid for when you park at a state parks trailhead that requires a fee. Passes are good for the calendar year. Annual boat launch passes are also available for \$100: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes>
- National Park Service annual passes: The park service offers general passes for \$80. It also has a variety of other discounted or free passes for seniors, fourth-graders, people with disabilities, some volunteers, and members of the military: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>

## GROUPS THAT JOIN HIKING SOCIETY CAN APPLY FOR MICRO-GRANTS

Do you have a trail maintenance backlog? Do you need help funding small trail projects? If so, Join American Hiking Society's Alliance Organization today (<http://tinyurl.com/ybn8p6s2>). Once you join as a new member or renew your Alliance membership, you will qualify to apply for a micro-grant up to \$3,000 from the National Trail Fund. The application process opens in January. More information can be found about the program here: <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-fund/>



## INTERIORWIDE LINK

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- An easy winter means terrific snow in the Interior: <http://tinyurl.com/y74lmjhd>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

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- Eagle Watch (state parks newsletter): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatcharchive>
- Alaska man again to appeal hovercraft ban to Supreme Court: <http://tinyurl.com/y748pjsc>

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Post-Christmas blues? Take a hike: <http://tinyurl.com/ybuzl52g>
- Muni's electric bike rules need to be addressed: <http://tinyurl.com/y9f5ptd7>
- HEADLAMP: Best fat biking in Anchorage: <http://tinyurl.com/y8o7umko>
- April ballot could contain roof repairs, road improvements and trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yarqm549>
- Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation: The Trail Ahead to 2018: <http://tinyurl.com/ychgjcha>

## SOUTHEAST LINK

- Top Ten Cabins On The Tongass National Forest: <http://tinyurl.com/y9xjd9sp>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Outdoor Explorer radio show: Learn about local climbing & what's up with bears lately?: <http://tinyurl.com/y8bv3j2t>
- Entrepreneur turns off millennial path of college or bust: <http://tinyurl.com/y7p5sf6h>
- The Alaska arm of the National Outdoor Leadership School is hiring for a number of positions, including Transportation Manager, Assistant Kitchen Manager, Kitchen Assistant, Issue Room Assistant, Operations, and Assistant Bus Driver. Read more at: <https://www.nols.edu/en/about/our-team/employment/>

# NATIONWIDE/WORLDWIDE

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## SUSTAINABLE TRAILS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MARCH

Some of the world's foremost trail experts will gather in West Virginia this spring to present hands-on instruction in trail construction, design, maintenance, development and management. The annual conference of the Professional Trail Builder's Association features multi-day workshops, classes, equipment, and construction demonstrations to provide attendees with practical tools to bring great trails to life. The core conference is March 26-28, 2018, with multi-day workshops before and after. More information may be obtained at <http://www.trailbuilders.org/training/sustainable-trails-conference-stonewall-2018>.

*(From Jon Underwood)*



## AHS OFFERS 2018 VOLUNTEER VACATIONS SCHEDULE



The American Hiking Society's 2018 Volunteer Vacations registration is now live. The group is offering many diverse trail maintenance projects across the country. The schedule provides both backpacking and day hiking options, a variety of difficulty levels, and indoor and outdoor accommodations to suit all experience levels and backgrounds. No prior trail maintenance experience is required, just the willingness to get

a little dirty and give back to the hiking trails you love.

Find projects and register here: [volunteervacations.americanhiking.org/em-volunteer-vacations/](http://volunteervacations.americanhiking.org/em-volunteer-vacations/)

## NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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### 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](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)

### TRAIL GUIDES

- Top Five Famous Trails in the U.S.: <http://tinyurl.com/y79zdaqk>

### ADVOCACY/VOLUNTEER

- Conservation Volunteers International (several trail-related trips): [conservationvip.org/destinations/](http://conservationvip.org/destinations/)
- American Hiking Society's Alternative (spring) Break volunteer opportunities: <http://tinyurl.com/y92qeyh2>

### GRANTS

- Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund (applications deadline Jan 31): <http://tinyurl.com/yaq7szxe>
- National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program (deadline Jan 23): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

### TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- For the latest American Trails news publications: <http://www.americantrails.org/trailtracks/index.html>

### STUDIES/REPORTS

- New Survey Finds Teens Spend Only One Hour Outdoors Per School Day: [www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3885](http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3885)

*OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:*

- At Three National Monuments, Quiet Trails and Questions About the Future: <http://tinyurl.com/ycb8vecf>
- From switchbacks to backslopes, here's how to read a trail: <http://tinyurl.com/y86uqjyd>

*SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL*

- Hiking With Dogs: The 10 Essentials (video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02unBjfgHA>
- Semi-Rad: The Joy Of Postholing: <http://tinyurl.com/yd3rnnqk>
- The rapidly disappearing infrastructure promises of 2017: <http://tinyurl.com/ydb4vrui>
- GOP Tax Cuts Threaten Funding for Transit, Biking, and Walking: <http://tinyurl.com/yckn3jga>

*INTERNATIONAL LINKS:*

- Best trails centres in Northern Ireland (mountain biking): <http://tinyurl.com/ydggcspp>

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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](mailto:fbxtrails@gmail.com). Note: submissions may be 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.