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**MINUTES**

**Girdwood Trails Committee**

**Regular Monthly Meeting -- Tuesday, October 4, 2016**

**Girdwood Community Room, 7pm**

**Call to Order** 7:02 Carolyn Brodin

Agenda Approved

September 6, 2016 minutes Approved

**Introduction of Guests/Presentations**

None

**Old Business**

*Trails Agreements:*

* Interagency Land Management Agreements (Kyle Kelley)
  + California Creek Trailhead & Beaver Pond/Abe’s Trailhead

No change in status, Kyle will work on this in coming months.

* Review USFS/MOA/GTC Memorandum of Understanding, exp 2017 (Kate Sandberg)

No changes recommended by Trails Committee other than changing contact information on page 5, item #6 and timing of MOU commencement and expiration page 6, item #10. For original agreement, there was significant lag time in commencement of MOU due to having all the signatures. The renewal MOU should begin immediately after expiration of this one and should be valid for 5 years or longest term allowable.

Kyle Kelley to follow up on MOU with USFS and MOA. Expiration is January 31, 2017.

*Trails Issues:*

* Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance (Dan Starr) - Progress report with Girdwood Nordic

Dan emailed that the group wouldn’t be able to attend tonight’s meeting. They did attend Girdwood Nordic meeting last month, and Deb Essex provided summary of that meeting. Girdwood Nordic provided advice on how to move forward in creating the Girdwood Mtn Bike Alliance as an entity. GMBA is already working with Girdwood, inc. Their proposal with Girdwood Nordic Ski Club is for hike up and ride down flow trails that would be built inside Nordic loop. No downhill winter biking. Summer alpine flow trail. GMBA will need to pursue their own permits with HLB. Idea was well supported by Girdwood Nordic Ski Club. In addition, Brian Burnett has helped GMBA make contact with Single Track Advocates (STA), to benefit from their experience.

* DOT/Airport Upper Valley Trail Access

Kyle Kelley reports that there has been no contact from DOT regarding trail access via the airport land. DOT is removing items remaining from Dario’s dogsled operation on that parcel. It is expected that DOT will be putting that parcel back up for leasing for aviation use. Deb Essex says she has concerns about access to the parcel and suitability of that land for aviation.

* Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Safety Corridor

Paving of highway is almost complete, still need striping on the main road. Paving approaches and Pedestrian Safety Corridor as well as some landscaping remains to be done. Group will work on project through the end of the month. Temperatures will be key in how far they get this fall as paving material has to be hot enough to be laid.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 1, 2016 in the Girdwood Community Room at 7:00 pm**

Girdwood Trails Committee Agendas and minutes are available on line: <http://www.muni.org/gbos>



* Iditarod Lower valley trail improvements (Kyle Kelley)

Will Brennan provides update from USFS crews working in Girdwood for the last month. They have cut the corridor designated by Alison, which connects the “couch corner” to California Creek Bridge.

Still waiting for Army Corps of Engineers permits before any work can be done on the tread or adding gravel. All info is complete with the Corps, waiting for permit to be issued. There are significant access challenges in getting gravel to the newly cut trail site. Will recommends that further work is done by professional contractor with heavy equipment in order to create sustainable trail at 6’ width currently in trail specifications.

Report Due in Oct for Anchorage Park Foundation Grant

For Grant Purposes, hours so far on this project are:

135 USFS hours @ professional rate

#TBA Alison Rein hours @ professional rate

# TBA Andy Hehnlin

This shows progress on the project, however there were delays due to road construction and permitting, so Carolyn will be providing this info and requesting an extension of the grant for another year.

Group discussed having USFS attend November Trails meeting to discuss the project and reconfirm trail width/location/schedule etc.

* Girdwood Community Trails Plan

Group cancelled meeting for October, but may call special meeting before November regular meeting. Grant application for $7000 matching grant from KMTA was approved. We will sign the contract and contact Nanette Stevenson to do the professional layout and provide document that we can continue working on. Once we have a copy to review, we’ll reconvene Trails Plan Working Group to review.

This grant will not cover mapping. Kyle is working with MOA to see about using their GIS ARC. He’s hopeful that Trails can hike the trails using this program and then overlay trails on google map.

* Prep for winter
  + Hand tram work

Planning for winter shutdown of the Hand Tram by November 1. Earlier if freeze-up or snow. Planning to fly the tram and old rope out, storing tram in town for the winter and doing work on it that is difficult to accomplish on site.

Fix welds

Replace latches/locks

Paint

Suspension rope needs to be tightened. Brian Burnett says Alyeska will complete Chair 6 work soon and will have time and staff to assist.

Hand tram has experienced high volume of traffic, no count on the overall use, but lots of hikers use it for out and back transportation instead of completing the Winner Creek Trail to Crow Creek Road. Starting next summer Glacier Valley Transit will offer bus service up to Crow Creek Mine with stop at the trailhead.

Suggestions from Trails Committee are:

Donation box to fund hand tram repairs

Intern to do survey to determine how many people use the tram

Recently MOA realized that the hand tram is outside of the Girdwood Service Area, so municipal funds and staff can’t legally be used to do the work out there. This will be a topic at the MOA/GBOS meeting scheduled for October 24 at 4PM in the Girdwood Community Room. Seeking ways to resolve this, perhaps extending the Girdwood Service Area boundary to include the tram. Dwaine states that perhaps GSA expansion should include the terrain for a future bridge as well. Girdwood Service Area and Hand Tram will be added to future Trails Agendas

* + grooming startup plan

Jim Braham and Peter Zug will be leads. Girdwood Nordic is working on placing a conex at the trail head for storage of snow machine and equipment so it doesn’t need to be hauled over from Moose Meadows conex.

Expect volunteer meeting in late November/early December.

* Moose Meadows/Alyeska Playing Field Survey

Study almost complete.

* Other Trails Issues

Suggestions for signage at Winner Creek T intersection

Will Brennan says that there are plans under way to improve trail designation on the Winner Creek Trail. Moving the existing sign for better visibility and using 2 sides of it for signage to make it clear which way back to hotel. Trails recommends sign a short way in to the trail stating “Upper Winner Creek Trail”. Will says they also are considering adding sign that states mileage to locations accessed by that trail (9 mi to Berry Pass, etc). Group also discusses sign at the Snow Cat Bridge.

Kate Sandberg will contact Girdwood Chamber to have trails removed from the Chamber map brochure. This map is not appropriate for hikers. Group discusses how to ensure that hikers have access to the Girdwood Trails Map. Perhaps turn in to tri-fold that can be placed in rack card holders. Also add how to download the map from website on the next printing of the trail maps.

*Budget and Grants*

* Financial Report (Diana Livingston)

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| Girdwood Trails Committee Financial Report | | |
| October 4, 2016 |  |  |
| Account with Girdwood Inc. |  | $11,689.12 |
| Last Report 9/6/2016 |  |  |
| Reserve for Trail Signs |  | (500.00) |
| Reserve for Forest Fair Fund |  | (80.03) |
| Balance Unreserved Funds |  | $11,109.09 |
| Receivable for Hehnlin Work |  | 1,465.00 |
| RAC Grant for Hand Tram |  |  |
| Closed August 11, 2016 |  |  |

* Grants
* Anchorage Park Foundation Grant

Discussed earlier in meeting, report is due 10/16/16 and need to request extension to 2017 to complete grant project on Lower Iditarod Trail.

* KMTA Grant

Also discussed earlier, $7000 matching grant for Girdwood Trails Plan.

Need to send thank you letter. Margaret to draft, Carolyn to sign.

* SOA Recreational Trails Grant

Grant application due end of October. Grants up to $50,000 for trail projects, not for maintenance. Funding comes as a percentage of the federal gas tax on automobile fuel for alternate transportation. Statewide Alaska receives $1.5 million to spread out among various projects, and has allocations required for multi-use, motorized use, non-motorized use trails.

Group discusses whether to apply for funds for Beaver Pond Trail or for the Lower Iditarod Trail. Will Brennan recommends going for full amount of grant as the Iditarod Trail work meets the requirements of the grant better than Beaver Pond Trail likely would. Beaver Pond Trail is more appropriate for crew such as SCA and funding can be pieced together for that project more effectively than will be possible with Lower Iditarod Trail.

Application requires letters of support from local groups: Girdwood Trails Committee, GBOS, and Iditarod Trail Blazers (suggested by Will Brennan). MOA staff request letter of support from GTC to include in application.

Group then moved to last item on agenda:

* Application for state trails grant by Glacier Ranger District, seeking GTC letter of support (Will Brennan)

Will Brennan and USFS are also applying for the SOA grant, and seek GTC support for their project.

Project is to build approx. ¾ mile spur trail from the Bartlett Whistle Stop to an overlook point that would be appropriate for camping. Application will be for $50,000, with construction in 2018.

Link to Girdwood Trails Committee is that significant number of users of this trail would likely use Girdwood as access point to AK RR service to the Whistle stop. Likely use trails in Girdwood, stay at hotel and local b&b’s, use restaurants, etc. Trail promotes healthy lifestyle important to Trails Committee.

Motion:

Girdwood Trails Committee moves to write letters of support for funding from the State of Alaska Recreation Trails Program Grant for the Lower Iditarod Trail construction work (application by MOA on behalf of GTC) and for the Barlett Glacier Spur Trail construction (application by USFS).

Motion by Kate Sandberg, 2nd by Lynne Doran

Motion passes 8 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstain.

Kate Sandberg/Margaret Tyler to write letters.

*Updates*

* Newspaper Article

Article appeared in recent issue of the Glacier City Gazette, regarding summer trails projects.   
No article discussed for next month.

* October LUC/GBOS Meeting Representative, and MOA/GBOS meeting on 10/24

Brian Burnett says he will attend on behalf of GTC.

* Girdwood Inc Roundup on Sept 23.

Kate Sandberg attended and spoke for GTC. Event was well attended and fun.

* Glacier City Trail Loop Marathon, October 1, 2016 (Brian Burnett)

Event went well, 39 people participated. Matias Saari won the race, and complimented the course.

In all $1070 was received in event fees; cost to run the race was $300, including permit from DNR of $125.

$770 net will be distributed among the following land managers/support @ $120 each:   
Girdwood Trails, Girdwood Nordic, Girdwood School, Glacier Ranger District, Chugach State Park, Glacier Valley Transit

Plan is to make this an annual event, first SAT in October. Will need more support from GTC in the future, considering adding a 50 mile component and a half-marathon.

**New Business**

* Girdwood Nordic Ski Club New Trail Systems (Deb Essex)

Deb and Brian Burnett present conceptual draft trail routes that Girdwood Nordic Ski Club is interested in proposing to GTC and to the community. Seeking input from GTC. Girdwood Nordic Ski Club will also be applying for funds from SOA Recreation Trails Grant.

Trails are in wooded areas, limited crossings, away from meadows and wetlands in North part of the valley, which is designated in the Girdwood Area Plan as recreational use. Trail concepts were determined by Bill Spencer, well-known trail designer statewide.

Conceptual proposed alignments are currently drafted in two phases.

Phase I is approx. 3.2k loop within the woods between meadows and Glacier Creek (Stumpy’s Summer Trail is along the bluff overlooking the creek)

Phase 2 is approx. 4k spur that would connect top of Phase I loop to cat track, and then could link to other trails to create loop.

Trails are proposed for 8’ width, users would be hikers, bikers, dog walkers, skijorers. Essentially all users except for horses.

Comment from Trails committee is that project is exciting, definitely need to be sure that trail is not visible from meadow.

Ken Wilkinson asks why a spur trail from the new Arlberg parking lot to the Winner Creek Trail, to deter pedestrian use of the Nordic 5K loop in winter, isn’t included in this group of proposed trail plans. Kyle Kelley states that Trails Committee had requested that staff try for grant funding for the access trail to Winner Creek from Arlberg parking, but there was not enough time to write the grant application.

Group needs time to review proposed alignment before they can make recommendation. Some members express concern about the width of the trails and who the summer users will be. Brian Burnett will present again in November. Deb will provide PDF of the proposed concept to Margaret to forward to the Trails Committee email list.

**Other Business**

None

Meeting adjourned 9:33PM