



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Alaska Long Trail News

National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study



March 2024



Hey, BLM Alaska wants you to be involved!

BLM Alaska is evaluating the characteristics of the proposed Alaska Long Trail and recommending its eligibility as an addition to the National Trails System as a National Scenic Trail (NST).

The purpose of the Alaska Long Trail NST feasibility study is to evaluate the feasibility, suitability, and desirability of designating the route as a NST.

Results of the trail study will be shared with Congress, which has the sole authority to enact legislation to designate new NSTs. Following that, rights-of-way, authorizations, and easements must be secured for the entirety of the route. Only after completion of that process could construction begin on the project. This feasibility study does not authorize any activities.

The preparation of the feasibility study meets the criteria set forth at 43 CFR 46.210(h) for a Departmental Categorical Exclusion.

This effort will depend on public input to help guide the direction of the study.

Schedule



Next Steps

The BLM will be hosting five in-person public meetings in the spring of 2024 and several more virtual meetings thereafter. Please continue to visit the project website on BLM's National NEPA register (i.e., ePlanning) page to learn more about project updates, public meetings, and more.

In-Person Public Meetings

Date & Location	Time	Meeting Place
Monday, April 8 - Anchorage	5:30pm – 7:30pm AK	Z.J. Loussac Library
Tuesday, April 9 - Seward	5pm – 7pm AK	Gateway Hotel
Wednesday, April 10 - Wasilla	3:30pm – 5:30pm AK	Wasilla Public Library
Thursday, April 11 - Cantwell	5pm – 7pm AK	Cantwell School Gym
Friday, April 12 - Fairbanks	5pm – 7pm AK	Birch Hill Ski Area

Contacts

Name	Email	Phone
Zach Million	zmillion@blm.gov	(907) 271-3386
Carrie Cecil	ccecil@blm.gov	(907) 271-1306

Other Resources

- For **more information**, please visit the project website on the BLM National NEPA Register:
<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/510>
- **Story Map** –
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/964af503d8604c50bfaec6243c7b20c0>
- **FAQ** –
<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/560>

Project Website



V



ALASKA LONG TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY COMMENT FORM



We encourage you to provide comments by filling out and submitting this form during one of the in-person public engagement sessions. Please use additional pages if needed. Please note route specific comments on physical maps, or via the GIS mapping tool.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Visit the BLM's project website for more information, updates:



Contact Information (Please Print)

Name: _____ Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Do you think the proposed route is nationally significant? Why or why not?

How do you currently use the area along the proposed corridor? How does this change by the season?

How might the designation of the AK Long Trail NST affect your area/community?

**Are there alternative segments that should be included? Why?
Are there segments that you think should NOT be included? Why?**

Please note route specific comments on physical maps, or via the GIS mapping tool.



Alaska Long Trail FAQ

Questions for the proposed Alaska Long Trail Feasibility Study

1. Q: How did the BLM choose the proposed routes for the study?

A: The routes were proposed by a local non-profit organization and provided to congressional officials as part of an overall proposal. The proposed routes include existing trails, roads, side trails, and even water routes. Many are conceptual in nature only.

2. Q: Are the proposed routes subject to change?

A: Yes. Proposed routes may change through discovery, analysis in the feasibility study, and feedback from landowners and stakeholders. The BLM may suggest alternate routes be chosen or find that the proposed routes are not a suitable or viable option.

3. Q: What is the timeline to complete the study?

A: Each federal agency has three fiscal years to complete the study after its assigned by Congress. For this project, the BLM must complete the study and submit it to Congress no later than fall/winter of 2025.

4. Q: What criteria is used to determine the suitability and feasibility of the proposed route as a national scenic trail?

A: The criteria are set forth by the National Trails System Act of 1968. Those criteria can be found by visiting the National Trails System Act, section 5(b).

5. Q: Once the study is completed, does this mean that proposed routes automatically become an authorized trail?

A: No. Only Congress can establish a National Scenic Trail through legislation before any construction or development could occur. Authorizations, rights of way, and easements must be approved.

6. Q: What types of uses could be allowed on a national scenic trail?

A: Potential trail uses allowed on designated components of the national trails system may include, but are not limited to, the following: bicycling, cross-country skiing, day hiking, equestrian activities, jogging or similar fitness activities, trail biking, overnight and long-distance backpacking, snowmobiling, and surface water and underwater activities.

7. Q: How are motorized uses managed on national scenic trails?

A: While Section 7(c) of the National Trails System Act (Act) states that "the use of motor vehicles along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited," Section 7(j) allows vehicles to be permitted on certain trails. These may include, but need not be limited to, snowmobiles, motorcycles, bicycles, four-wheel drive or all-terrain off-road vehicles, and trail access for handicapped individuals. The feasibility study will examine the appropriateness of motorized trail use along the trail. If Congress designates the Alaska Long Trail as a national scenic trail, they can specify acceptable uses as they did with the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which permits the use of motorized vehicles on designated segments of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Where allowed, the Act intends for motorized use to occur in accordance with regulations prescribed by the appropriate Secretary in accordance with other Federal laws, or any State or local laws.

8. Q: Could there be designated camping areas along this trail or developed trailheads?

A: National Scenic Trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related-public-use facilities. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide sufficient access opportunities to such trails and, to the extent practicable, efforts shall be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established. Trailheads could be located in a variety of locations, if authorized. They could be at existing trailhead locations or could be proposed to be developed based on recommendations or analysis.

9. Q: How could the trail cross major rivers or other terrain features?

A: The trail study will evaluate the terrain and water features along the proposed route that would restrict access, require development, or otherwise need to be considered for long term feasibility.

10. Q: If authorized by Congress, who could be building the new trails?

A: If Congress authorizes the proposed routes as a National Scenic Trail, the trail could utilize a variety of options for development. Those include 1) maximizing the use of existing trails, routes, and roads where available, 2) Use of land manager staff or volunteers, and 3) possible contracts for services.

11. Q: When will trail construction begin?

A: Once BLM finalizes the feasibility study and transmits that to Congress, then and only then, can Congress make the decision to establish the proposed Alaska Long Trail as a National Scenic Trail. Following that, rights of way, authorizations, and easements must be secured for the entirety of the route. No construction will begin as a result of this feasibility study.

12. Q: How can I keep up to date on the project and upcoming meetings and comment periods?

A: The BLM will be hosting five public meetings the week of April 8-12 and several more virtual meetings following those. Please continue to visit this page to learn more about project updates, public meetings locations and times, and more.

BLM National NEPA Register project website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/510>



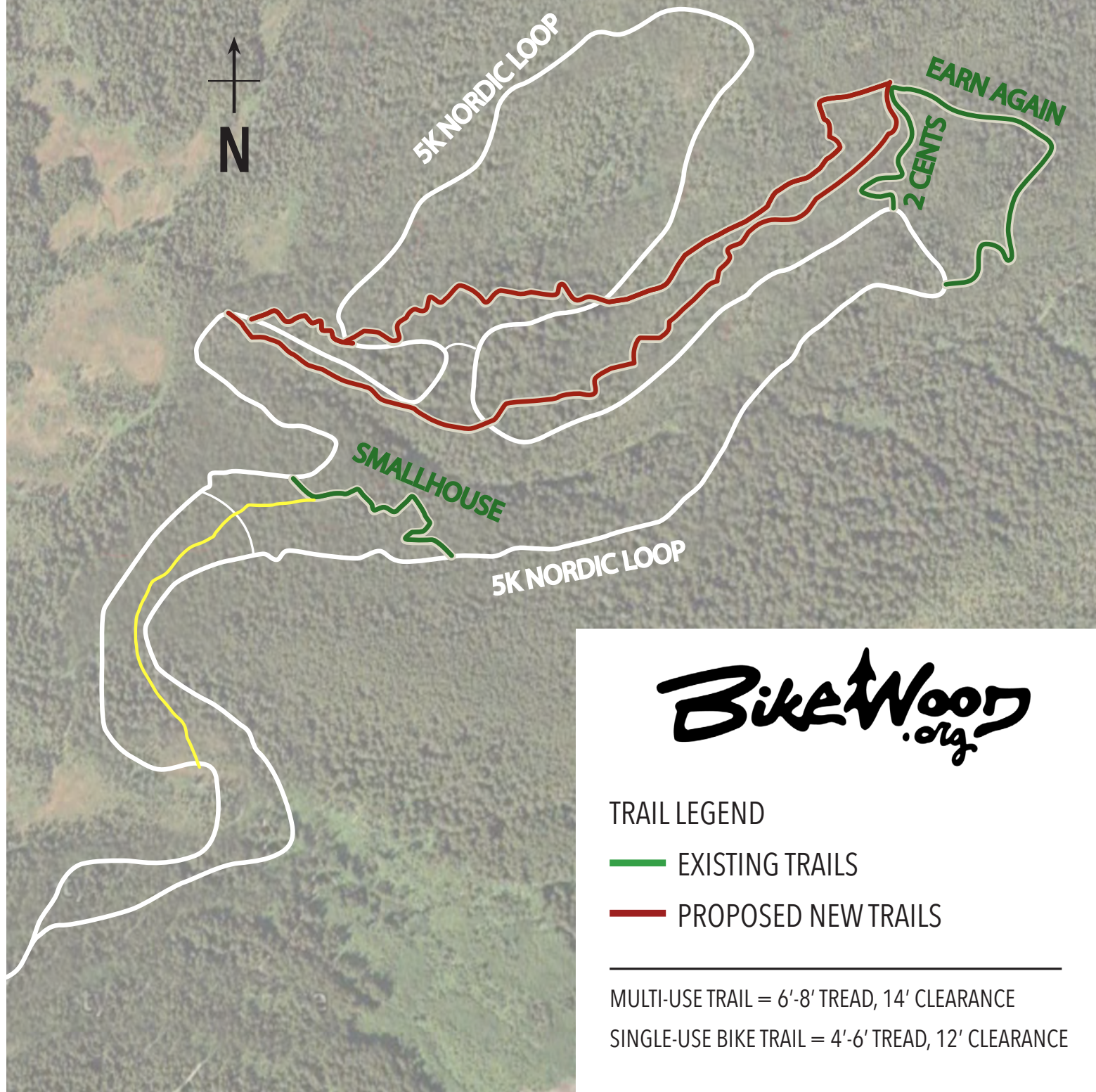
BLM comment period regarding Alaska Long Trail:

Here's the link to general information: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/510>

Comments: <https://logansimpson.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/reporter/index.html?appid=c2de6a60f56a474083849ebb9896b7ba>



GIRDWOOD BIKE PARK

PHASE 2



BikeWood
.org

TRAIL LEGEND

-  EXISTING TRAILS
-  PROPOSED NEW TRAILS

MULTI-USE TRAIL = 6'-8' TREAD, 14' CLEARANCE
SINGLE-USE BIKE TRAIL = 4'-6' TREAD, 12' CLEARANCE



May 2024 Report Girdwood Trails Committee

Moose are calving. Bears are waking up. Birds are nesting and dogs don't help. Please be wildlife aware. Watch for flyers regarding upcoming Bear Safety Training in June.

Volunteers and summer projects -

Thanks to all our groomers and other volunteers! We'll be setting dates for volunteer events in 2024 with Girdwood Trails Committee and Friends of Girdwood Trails.

Thank you to Ben and co for clearing deadfall from the Beaver Pond Trail. We understand that it is tree free from the bike path up to the snow melt, the trail to that point dry and enjoyable!

Volunteers must complete at 2024 agreement, available via email or swing by the office to get signed up!

Updates and other business:

Girdwood Valley Trails Management Plan. Current version is posted on the GBOS website. Management Plan can be updated now that Master Plan is complete.

Imagine! Girdwood. Girdwood Comprehensive plan is going to Planning soon, anticipating hearing in July. See Imagine!Girdwood website for more information.

Financial report: \$72,697.81 held with Girdwood Inc as of April 1. **PENDING UPDATE**

Grants Status report:

State of Alaska, Capital Budget: Thank you to Alaska Trails for including the suspension bridge to replace the Hand Tram in their requests for funding of the State of Alaska. State has awarded \$1.2M for this project as part of Alaska Long Trail Funding. Construction goal is 2024/2025.

Rasmuson Tier II Grant: GVSA has been awarded funding for this project.

Alaska Community Foundation Trail Care Grant: GVSA was awarded \$2032. Purchasing trail tools with the funds.

KMTA 2024 Grant cycle: No grant cycle in early 2024. Pending info on next grant cycle

Recreational Trails Program Grant (RTP): GVSA submitted RTP grant application for work on Middle INHT Oct 31. Responding to questions from FWHA.

Dugan Family donation for trails signs on Middle Iditarod Trail and bench at the 5K parking are nearing completion. Remaining is the trail sign that will be produced and placed.

Dugan Family donation for reconstruction of 2 bridges on the Middle Iditarod Trail. We've started collecting materials and to work on this project.

Trail Map Project: Staff met with contractor May 1 and is waiting for updated draft of summer map to share with map committee.

Trails Commercial Use Permits: 2024 permits are being issued by Girdwood Parks and Recreation. Any business operating commercially on Girdwood public land and trails should have a permit issued locally. Contact for requesting permits is girdwoodpermits@anchorageak.gov 907-343-8373. Report operators without permits to Kyle Kelley: kyle.kelley@anchorageak.gov 907-343-8374.