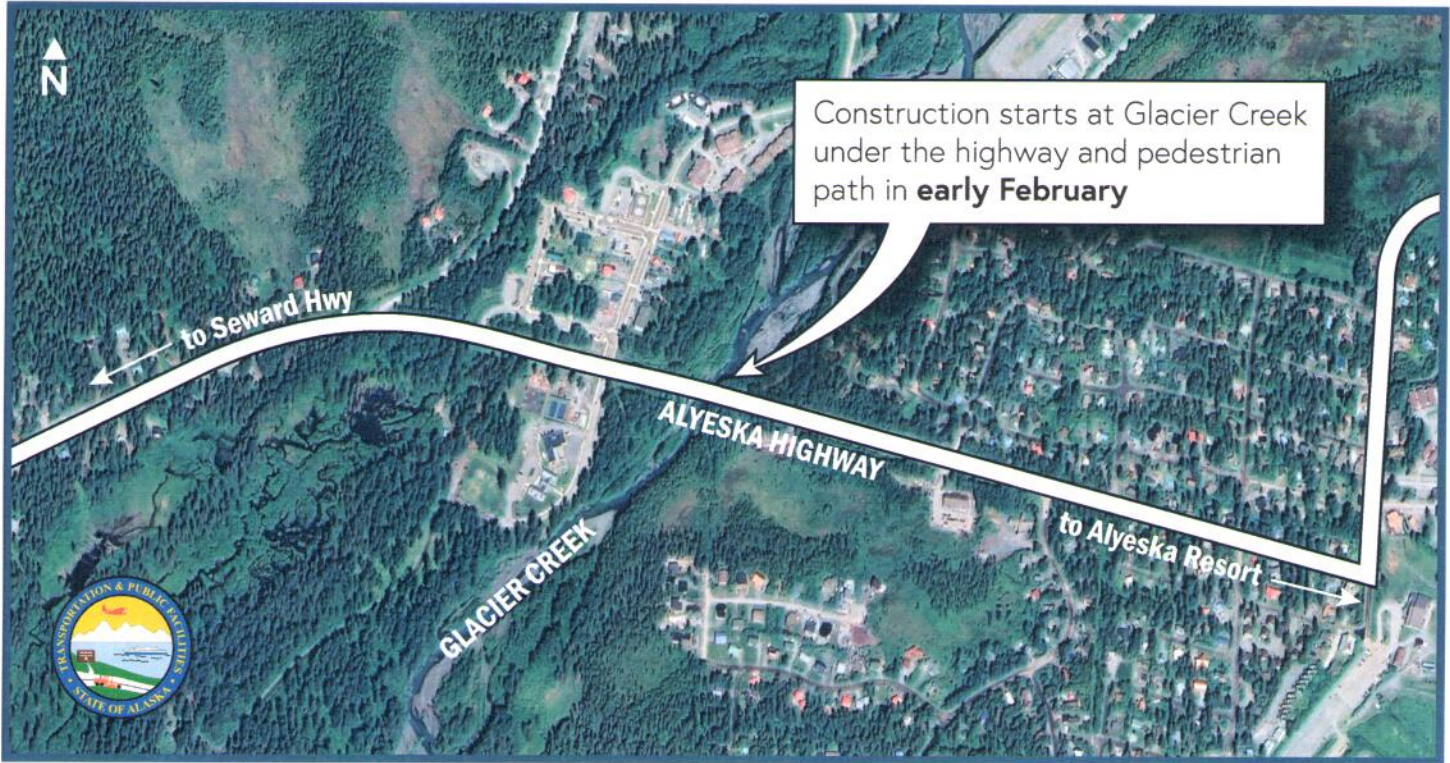


ALASKA DOT&PF WINTER CONSTRUCTION

Alyeska Hwy Glacier Creek Bridge



What

Construction crews will be working at Glacier Creek just upstream of the pedestrian bridge that runs along Alyeska Highway. They will be placing materials along the bank to prevent further erosion around the pedestrian bridge.

When

We expect construction to start in early February and be complete by the end of the month.

Why

Ongoing erosion could eventually affect the bridge structure. We are placing materials to stabilize the bank, prevent further erosion, and protect the bridge, which is an important transportation link for the community and carries utilities across the creek. We are performing this work in the winter because this is when it has the lowest environmental impacts.

Impacts to vehicles & pedestrians

Equipment and crews will be on and near the Alyeska Highway and pedestrian path throughout the month of February. Travelers can expect:

- Flaggers and reduced speeds on the highway
- Flaggers and short wait times on the paved path that runs parallel to the highway
- The path from Davos Road to the paved path will likely be closed during construction

Questions?

Contact Justin Shelby, DOT&PF Information Officer

✉ justin.shelby@alaska.gov

☎ 907-269-6323

Check **511.alaska.gov** for updates!



It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Persons with a hearing impairment can contact the department by dialing Alaska Relay at 711 or 1-800-770-8973 and ask the communication assistant to call the telephone number listed. We are also able to offer, upon request, reasonable accommodations for the special needs related to disabilities.



February 2024 Report Girdwood Trails Committee

Thank you!

Sherry and Bob Dugan for a donation for rebuilding 2 bridges on the Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail and Josh Meister for his donation to trails projects.

Thanks also to – Groomers, shovelers and other volunteers for all the work on the trails! USFS for clearing the trees that have fallen on Winner Creek Trail and Ben and Jill Kohler for shoveling and snow dog grooming the Winner Creek Trail.

Shane Larson and Peter Zug for their work fixing and maintaining the grooming snow machines!

Updates and other business:

Girdwood Valley Trails Management Plan. Current version is posted on the GBOS website. Management Plan meetings are on hold until Trails Master Plan is complete.

Girdwood Trails Master Plan. Plan was accepted at LUC and at GBOS at their FEB meetings and HLBAC in June and received approval by Planning and Zoning November 6. Final approval will be with Anchorage Assembly. This is now planning on February 13 introduction and adoption at the meeting on Feb 27.

Imagine! Girdwood. Imagine! Girdwood is seeking input on land use maps. Visit imaginegirdwood.org

Financial report: \$72,697.81 held with Girdwood Inc.

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: Rasmuson is aware of current status of bridge and goals and is committed to helping once our funding is a little farther along.

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

Recreational Trails Program Grant (RTP): GVSA submitted RTP grant application for work on Middle INHT Oct 31. Progress through the ORTAB was positive, pending hearing final outcome.

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'll start to work on this in the spring.

Trail Map Project: Staff received a rough draft from the graphic designer and met with maps committee in December. Staff and committee are working through changes with the contractor.

Trails Commercial Use Permits: 2023 Permittees have provided their use reports and paid fees. 2024 permits are being issued.

Girdwood Trails Work Plan Outline 2023

Deb's Way

- Brush once during season
- Improve Drainage
- Add gravel as needed

All completed.

Beaver Pond:

- Brushing: Twice during the season 2023
- Improve Trail tread on step side slopes as needed
- Improve vegetation setbacks in the first mile of trail from Gird to Bird path
- Replace boardwalk with gravel as it can be done
- Secure and support existing board walk
- Add netting to mitigate slippery boardwalks
- Improve Drainage where needed

All completed.

Abe's trail

- Improve trail in wet area in the beginning section
- Inspection/brushing to remove deadfall

All completed

California Creek

- Inspection/brushing to remove deadfall - completed
- Improve tread as needed - postponed
- Create alternate connector to Abe's Trail - postponed

Athabaskan Trail, from Crow Creek road to Beaver pond bridge at school:

- Add netting to mitigate slippery board walks - completed
- Reroute away from pond to eliminate boardwalk – postponed.

Lower Iditarod NHT between Alyeska highway and Ruane road

- Brushing 2 times during 2023 season - completed
 - Inspect and repair trail tread as needed (esp bridge to south trailhead) - completed
- *Note: damage from storms in Sept will require some work in 2024. Best wait for fall storms to pass.

Lower Iditarod between Alyeska highway and trailhead:

- Brush trail along access road to trailhead.- completed

Iditarod trail between School and Crow Creek Road: No SHPO for middle INHT. Work was done but is not part of the KMTA grant reimbursement.

- Brush trail at least once during the 2023 season - completed
- Improve drainage as needed - completed
- Remove boardwalk as allowable –
- Improve gravel tread as possible - completed
- Root management
- Add middle Iditarod Trail maps and location signage - completed
- Add netting to mitigate slippery board walks - completed

Iditarod trail between Crow Creek Road Lower and Crow Creek Road higher (Norms Falls):

- Brush trail at least once in 2023 season
- Improve trail tread as needed
- Root management
- Repair boardwalk as needed
- Add netting to mitigate slippery boardwalks
- Add middle Iditarod Trail maps and location signage

Virgin Creek

- Continue trail work to the overlook area.- Future project.
- Improve parking options and address neighborhood concerns - completed

Shortcut from Alyeska bike path to Davos road:

- Brush once during 2023 season – completed
- Remove organic layer and expose gravel – future project
- Improve drainage – future project
- Install culvert at the base of the hill – future project
- Add gravel as needed. – Future project

Lion's Club Park:

- Select location and brush/construct trail to Glacier Creek overlook

Danich Trail, Wagon Trail and social connector trails up to neighborhoods:

- Inspect trails, remove deadfall and brush as needed at least once

Arlberg Parking Lot:

- Add park bench and prepare for trail map sign at kiosk



**GIRDWOOD TRAILS
A L A S K A**

February TBA, 2024

Senator Cathy Giessel; Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov
Representative Laddie Shaw; Representative.Laddie.Shaw@akleg.gov
State Finance Committee; senate.finance@akleg.gov
House Finance Committee; house.finance@akleg.gov

Dear Alaska State Legislators and Finance Committee members,

We seek your support for the 24 [Alaska Long Trail](#) (AKLT) projects, submitted into CAPSIS for inclusion in the FY2025 state capital budget, totaling \$23 Million to fill key shovel-ready and planning-ready gaps along the length of the planned route.

These projects are part of the planned Seward-to-Fairbanks Alaska Long Trail. The Alaska Long Trail, when complete, will become a world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain and diverse communities from Seward to Fairbanks, embracing the many ways (motorized and non-motorized) Alaskans recreate outdoors and bolstering the Alaska economy by attracting visitors from all over the world.

We thank the State Legislature for securing funding for [10 Alaska Long Trail projects in FY2023 and FY2024 state capital budgets](#), totaling \$5.6 Million, [including funding to assist with construction of a suspension bridge in Girdwood to reconnect the Winner Creek Trail.](#)

We hope that this legislative session you will support the new set of the Long Trail projects, including the four that didn't make it through the vetoes last year.

ALASKA LONG TRAIL IN GIRDWOOD

Girdwood has submitted a request for funding of the Girdwood Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail. This trail is both part of the Alaska Long Trail Iditarod National Historic Trail Network and provides connectivity to and from the larger trail systems and the town itself. Our project is to rebuild bridges, improve trail tread and drainage to bring this section of trail to the USFS Class 3 level. It will restore an historic section of trail that is, in some locations, very tricky for many trail users to navigate currently.

This local project has broad support of the USFS Glacier Ranger District, the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area, and from the community as expressed by the Girdwood Board of Supervisors and Girdwood Nordic Ski Club as well as from the Girdwood Trails Committee. We have authorization from the Heritage Land Bank, which is the land manager for these lands. The trail work is included in the Girdwood Trails Plan, which is awaiting adoption by the Anchorage Assembly and was included in the Girdwood Iditarod Trail Route Study, which was adopted by the Anchorage Assembly in 1995. In short, this is a well-studied, well-supported longstanding project for the community and visitors of Girdwood.

Girdwood has self-funded and fundraised for significant work on the Girdwood Lower Iditarod National Historic Trail, which was similar disrepair when we began working on it in 2019. The lower section connects the old and new townsites and is now a well-used recreational and transportation corridor in the community. We are confident that restoration of the Middle section of trail will be similarly well utilized and appreciated.

BENEFITS OF THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL

With some of the world's most stunning wild places, Alaska is overdue in creating a world-class, long trail system of its own. Goals and outcomes of building the trail include:

Economic Development: Outdoor recreation infrastructure is *essential* infrastructure, building on Alaska's global competitive advantage, and supporting local jobs, business opportunities, and a stronger, more durable AK economy. Long trails are potent, proven attractions that will increase the time and money travelers spend in Alaska, growing jobs for residents, spawning business opportunities, and invigorating the economies of trail towns and communities along the route and statewide. If typical year's out-of-state travelers had reasons to spend one more day in Alaska, the result would be an additional \$250M in annual spending in our state.

Access to Public Lands: "On/off-ramps" to the Alaska Long Trail will help Alaska residents access public lands for a variety of uses. Existing access opportunities are insufficient to satisfy the growing demand in outdoor recreation, whether it is motorized, nonmotorized, hunting, trapping, etc.

Reducing the Backlog of Maintenance: Alaska State Parks has a large and growing backlog of maintenance. Funding for Alaska Long Trail projects have focused on improving existing trails first - reducing this backlog, followed by filling small gaps before taking on large construction projects.

USE & USERS: The ultimate goal is a network of routes accommodating a variety of uses, including some braids open to motorized use, and others for non-motorized hiking, biking and skiing. Some segments may include the Alaska Railroad or, like in Nenana Canyon, with a local rafting guide company. The Long Trail will be an Alaska long trail; a braided, four-season trail system designed for hikers, bikers, skiers, ATV's, snowmachines, for both day and multi-day use.

OUTDOOR RECREATION IN ALASKA

The Alaska Long Trail project is set against the backdrop of the robust Outdoor Recreation economy. In 2022, the Outdoor Recreation industry in Alaska generated \$2.6 billion in economic output, supported more than 20,000 jobs and accounted for 4 percent of the state's economy.

- Growth in Alaska's outdoor recreation economy between 2021 and 2022 was second fastest in the U.S. (after Hawaii) and outpaced the rate of growth of both the state and national economies.
- Total visits to some Alaska State Parks increased 50% from 2019 to 2022.
- Hiking is the fastest growing activity for both air and cruise visitors to Alaska.
- Visitors would spend an additional \$250 million in Alaska if they stayed "One More Day".
- Three million visitors a year hike a portion of the Appalachian Trail - a huge potential market for Alaska.

We ask that you support the inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail projects, submitted into CAPSIS, in the FY2025 state capital budget.

Please call or write if you have questions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Barb Crews, Chair
Girdwood Trails Committee

Cc: Alaska Trails; steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org

I am compiling this year's submissions to the state capital budget (CAPSIS) for Alaska Long Trail (AKLT) related projects. Haley shared with me the project description for the Middle Iditarod Trail.

It would be helpful to have a couple of letters of support for this project before February 15th (so that I can add them by Feb 16th).

I know that the Trails Committee is meeting next week - would it be possible to request a letter of support from them?

If there are other possible LOS writers, please let me know if you want me to reach out to them directly or if you will.

I could potentially be present on Tuesday if helpful to talk about the AKLT in this context.

Letters of support could either focus just on the project's benefits or also incorporate AKLT language.

Attached:

- Middle Iditarod project description
- LOS template for AKLT in general

Let me know if I can help in any way, thanks!

Mariyam