

Building a Stronger Alaskan Economy

Alaska Trails Initiative

Alaska Long Trail &

Land and Water Conservation Fund:

Opportunities for strengthening Kenai outdoor recreation economy

Presentation for KPB

March 2, 2021



Alaska Trails Initiative

Who's Involved? Sponsored by Alaska Trails and a growing Alliance of statewide partners including agencies, businesses, trail user groups, regional marketing and related tourism organizations

Partners include

Sitka Trails Works | Juneau Trail Mix |
Mat Su Parks and Trails | Anchorage Park
Foundation | NPS RTCA | KMTA | USFS
Alaska Regional Office

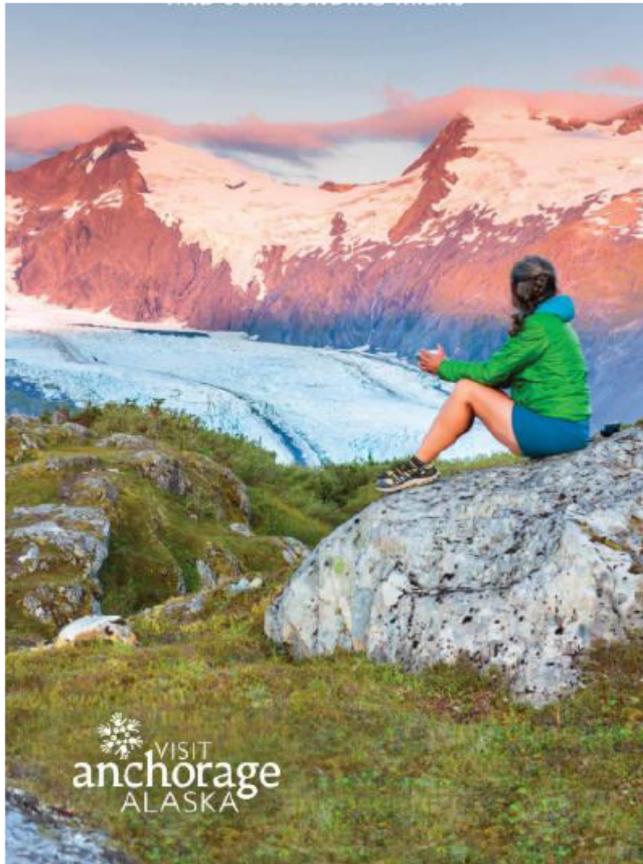


Alliance Goals

- Build a more durable, **stronger AK economy**
- Better **attract and retain** residents, retirees, businesses
- Make it more inviting to lead **active, heathy lives**
- Expand **diversity** in outdoor recreation users
- Guide growth to help **sustain what makes Alaska unique**

More information <https://www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative>





We need investments that better deliver what we promise in our marketing material

Alaska has barely tapped our state's remarkable outdoor resources.

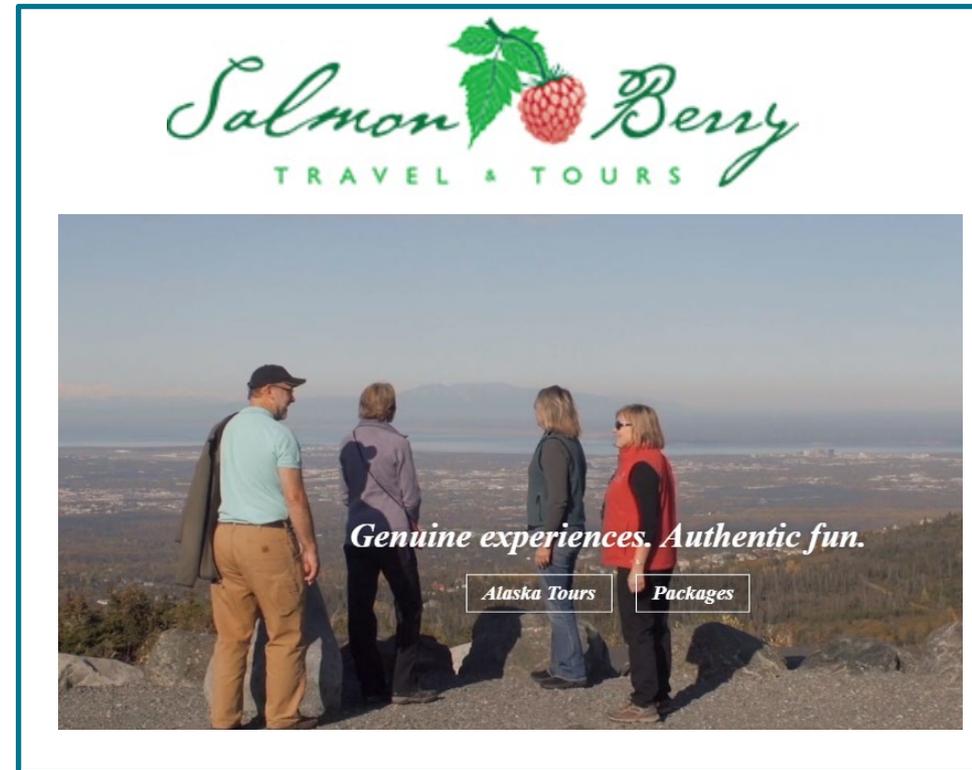
With smart investments in trails, huts, signs and trail marketing we could build a stronger, more durable Alaska economy.

Investing in trails and outdoor recreation infrastructure is one of the best ways to rebuild Alaska's economy

One More Day: "OMD"

Average length of stay for visitors to New Zealand – **19 days** ...for out of state visitors to Alaska – **9.1 days**

If just half of a typical year' out of state visitors spend one more day in Alaska the result is an extra **\$137 million in-state spending**



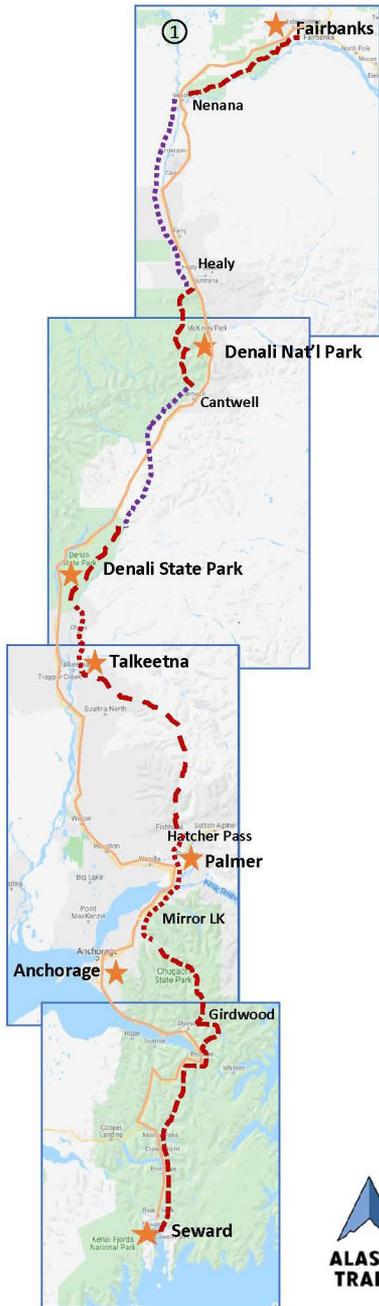
Sources: Economic Impact of Alaska's Visitor Industry, 2017 - Nov 2018

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/record-breaking-3-7-million-visitors-to-new-zealand>

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/dev/tourismdevelopment/tourismresearch.aspx>

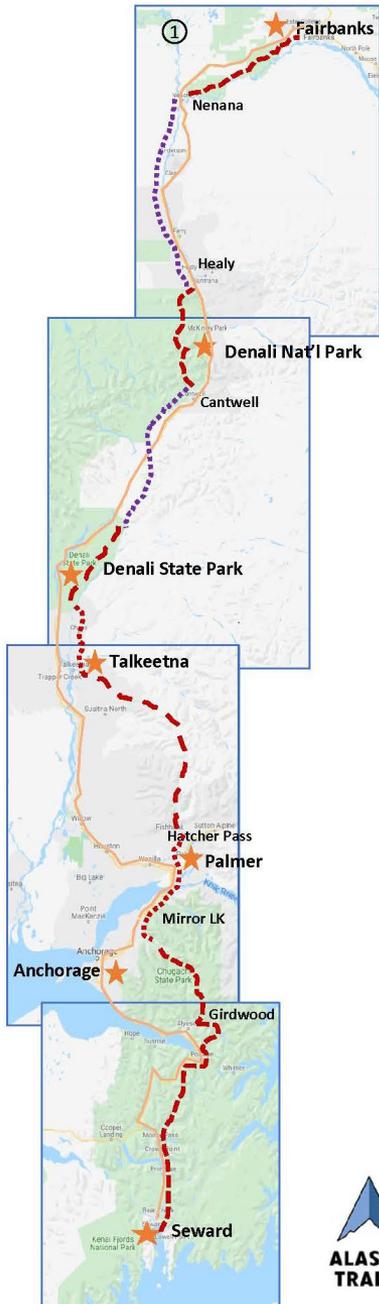
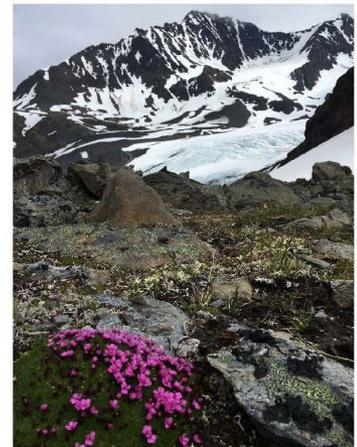
WHY AN ALASKA “LONG TRAIL”?

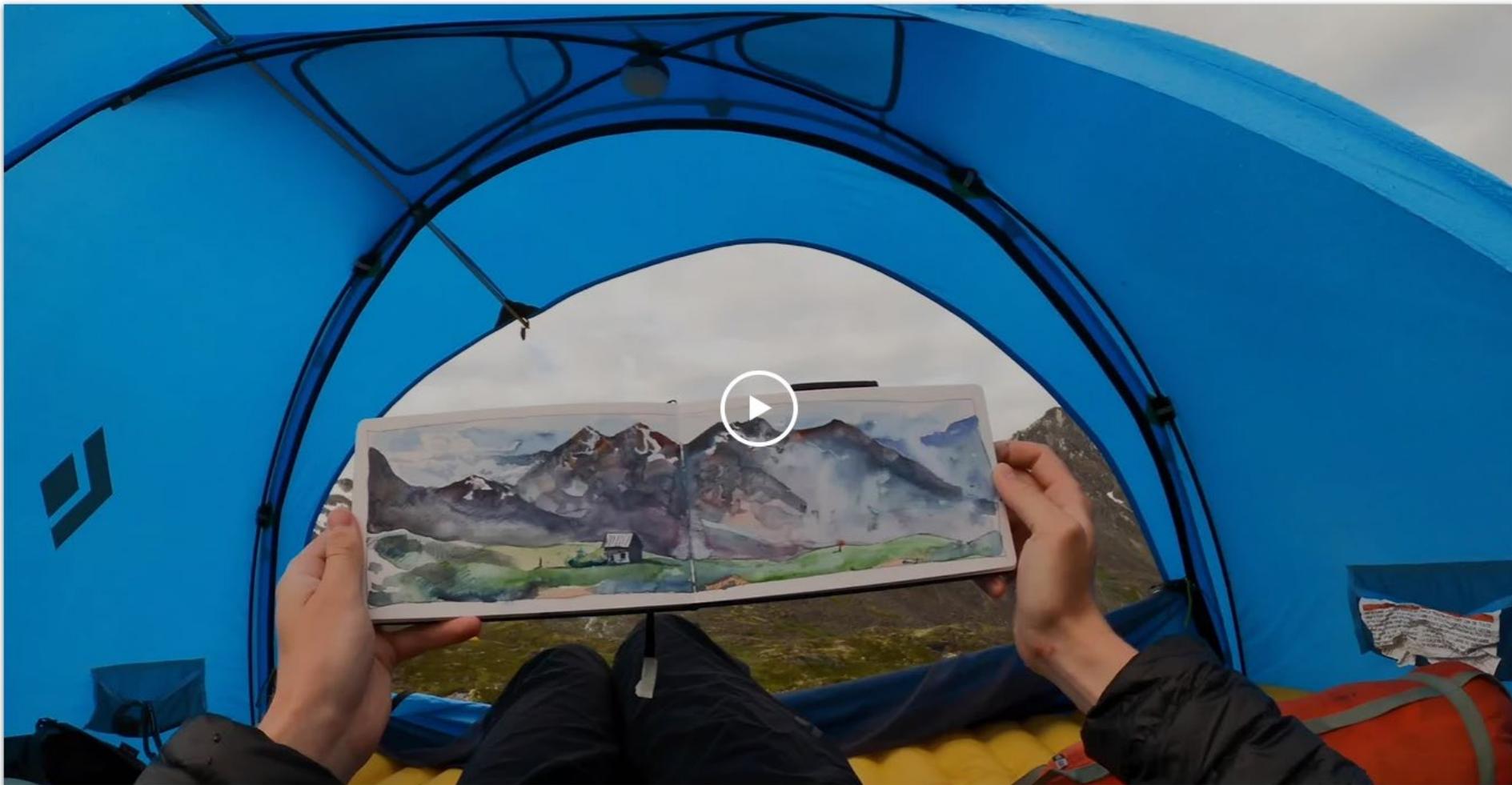
- A Long Trail creates **more value than the sum of its parts.**
- World-class trails like Appalachian, Pacific Crest & Continental Divide Trails in the US are **destinations.**
- Appalachian Trail: In 50 years, 30,000 have hiked the full trail; **three million visitors** hike a portion each year.
- 100% Increase in growth in John Muir Trail Park Service permits 2011 to 2015.
- Growing Interest: hiking was the fastest growing activity for both independent and cruise out-of-state travelers in Alaska from 2011-2016.



WHY FAIRBANKS TO SEWARD?

- **Momentum & landowner support**
- **Economic Impact** - near to communities.
- **Manageable Costs** - portions already exist
- **“Goldilocks Factor”** - wild but not too wild
- **Wow Factor** - spectacular country
- **Flexible** - 4-season/multi-use route





Stitching it all Together The Alaska Long Trail

<https://www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail>

Alaska Trails Initiative

STATEWIDE TRAILS INVESTMENT STRATEGY



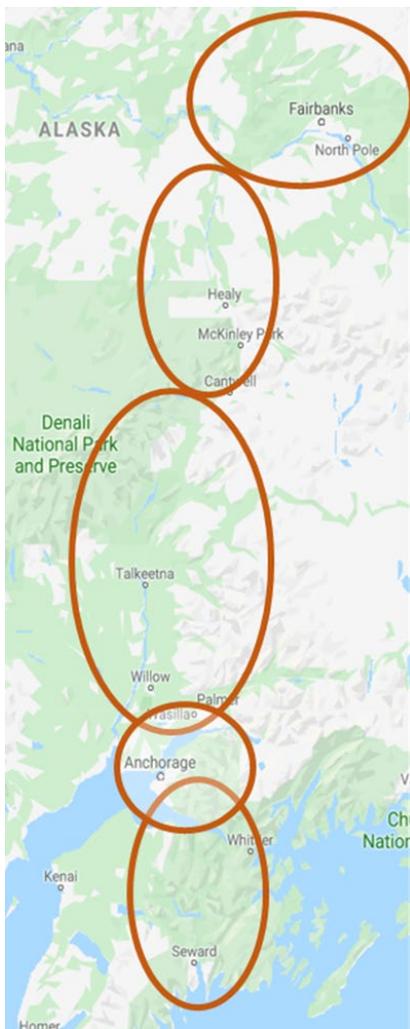
Draft April 2020

Large sections of the proposed Long Trail are already identified as priorities for improvement.



See the full document at www.alaska-trails.org/trails-investment-strategy

Investment Strategy – Partners & Supporters



The Investment Strategy is prepared by the Alaska Trails Initiative, sponsored by Anchorage-based nonprofit Alaska Trails. This document would not be possible without active participation and support from dozens of individuals and agencies. Alaska Trails is deeply grateful for the active participation and contributions from the following individuals, listed by area of focus.

Seward to Anchorage Trail Projects

Mackenzie Barnwell – Alaska Huts Association
Judy Bittner – Iditarod Nat'l Historic Trail Alliance
Tim Channon, Karen Kromrey, Alicia King – USFS Chugach National Forest
Jessica Szelag, Lia Slemmons – Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Heritage Area (KMTA)

Mat Su Trail Projects

Wes Hoskins – Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation
Stuart Leidner – AK DNR Parks & Outdoor Recreation
Joe Meehan, AK Department of Fish & Game
Eric Phillips, George Hoden - Mat Su Borough
Bonnie Quill, Mat Su CVB

Southeast Trail Projects

Lynne Brandon, Sitka Trail Works
Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Juneau Trail Mix
Erik Boraas, Former Juneau Trails Mix
Dan Kirkwood, Pack Creek/Juneau Econ Development

Denali Trail Projects

Trena Haugen, Clay Walker – Denali Borough
Miriam Valentine, Jennifer Johnston - Denali Nat'l Park

Fairbanks Trail Projects

Alison Arians, State Division of Forestry
Deb Hickok, Visit Fairbanks
Brooks Ludwig, State Division of Parks
Geoffrey Orth, Interior Trail Association
Eric Troyer, multiple trail organizations
Jon Underwood, Happy Trails
Bryant Wright, Fairbanks No. Star Borough
Glen Hemingson, Skylar Travel
Jomo Stewart, Fairbanks Economic Development

Anchorage Trail Projects

Joe Hall, Kurt Henzel – AK DNR DPOR
Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board, (in particular Mark “St Mark” Spano, Claire LeClair, Kevin Keeler, Shannon Donovan, David Hart, Irene Turletes, & Joe Hall)
Josh Durand, Steve Rafuse, Maeve Nevins – Muni. of Anchorage Parks Department
Beth Nordlund, Diana Rhoades – Anchorage Park Foundation
Bill Popp, Emma Irish – Anchorage Economic Development Corporation
Julie Saupe, Visit Anchorage

Statewide/Multiple Sections

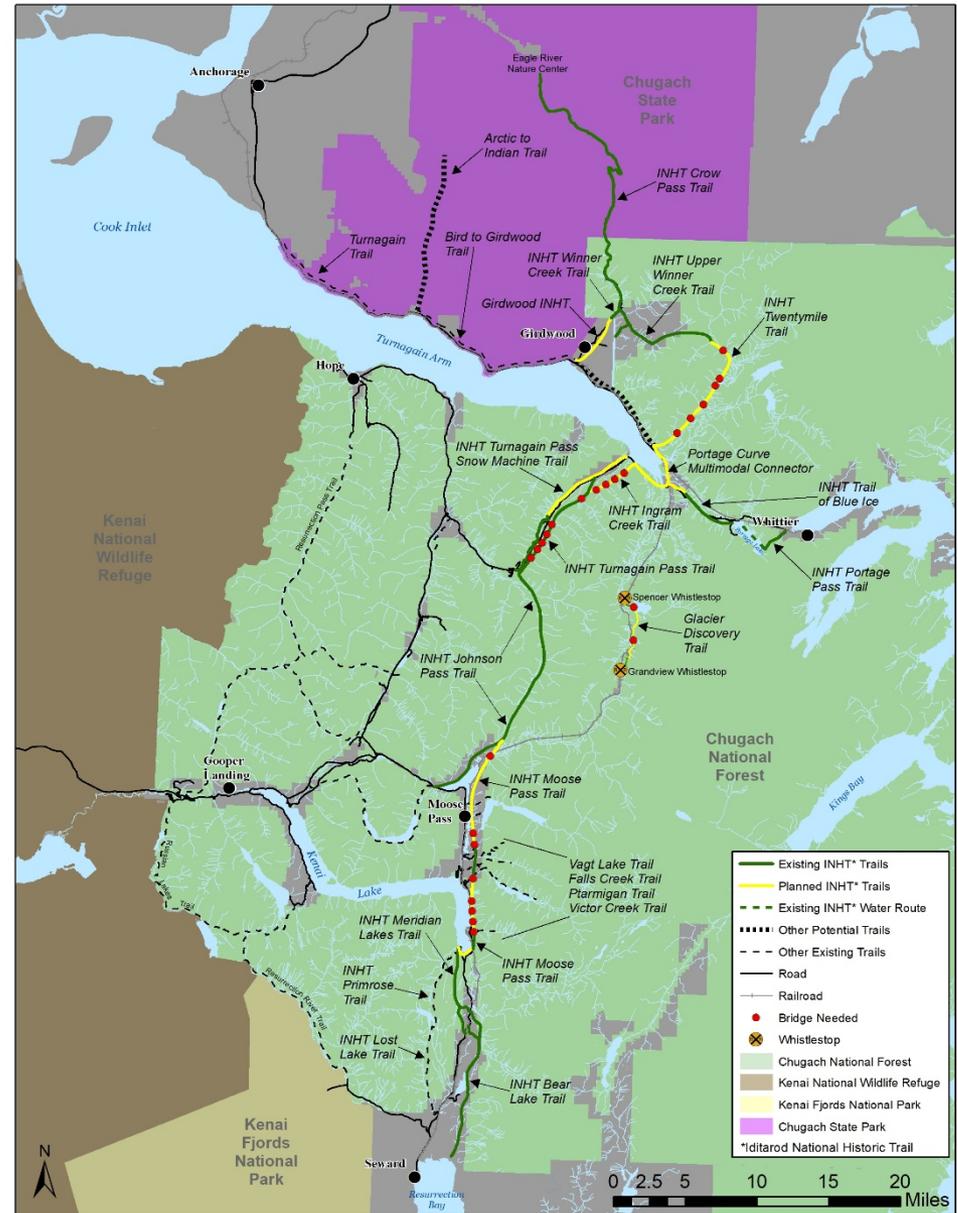
Keith Comstock, State of AK, DCCED
Mike Downs, Rivers Trails Conservation Assistance, NPS
Ricky Gease, Alaska DNR DPOR
Lee Hart, Alaska Outdoor Alliance
James King, Sharon Seim - USFS Alaska Regional Office
Julie Jessen, Sarah Leonard, Josh Howes chair and other members of the ATIA Tourism Policy & Planning Committee

Jean Ayers – AK State Parks LWCF
Wendy Sailors, Alaska DNR DPOR
Don Striker, Peter Christianson – NPS
Jeff San Juan, AIDEA
Erin Dovichin, Alaska Venture Fund
Patrick Shannon, National Forest Foundation
Reps of a range of outdoor rec businesses

Investment Strategy Extract – Anchorage-Seward



The Turnagain Pass area has all the ingredients of an accessible, enticing destination – except a trail. Phase 1 of this project would fill that gap. *Source: USFS*



“Southern Trek” of the Iditarod
Identified as one leg of the full Iditarod Trail, one of 15 recognized National Trails in the US. Completing this section focuses on filling gaps, building bridges.

We would love to hear from you!

- Do you have Long Trail project ideas for the Kenai?
 - Would you like to be part of the Kenai Long Trail working group?
 - Do you have questions about the project?
-

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2021-014**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEWARD,
ALASKA, SUPPORTING THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE
ALASKA LONG TRAIL FROM SEWARD TO FAIRBANKS**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Long Trail is an initiative sponsored by Alaska Trails that seeks to establish a 500-mile trail from Seward to Fairbanks, with a potential expansion extending north of Fairbanks for a total length of 2000 miles; and

WHEREAS, supporting the Alaska Long Trail is consistent with Seward Parks & Recreation's mission to preserve, improve, and promote the city's natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations; and

Land and Water Conservation Fund

- Federal \$\$ for outdoor recreation
- \$40M in 350 projects in AK since 1965
- Doubles local and state investments through 50%-50% match (cash, labor, in-kind)
- Eligibility: ½ municipal, borough and tribal governments, ½ state DPOR
- Increase to \$2.5M a year going forward through 2020 Great American Outdoors Act
- 3 year allocation – FFY2018 \$\$ are lost
- 2019 state portion of LWCF is slated for Kenai projects
 - \$1.25 M Kasilof boat launch
 - \$650,000 Morgan's Land boat launch



**ALASKA NEEDS TO
CLAIM ITS ANNUAL
\$2.5M OF LWCF!**

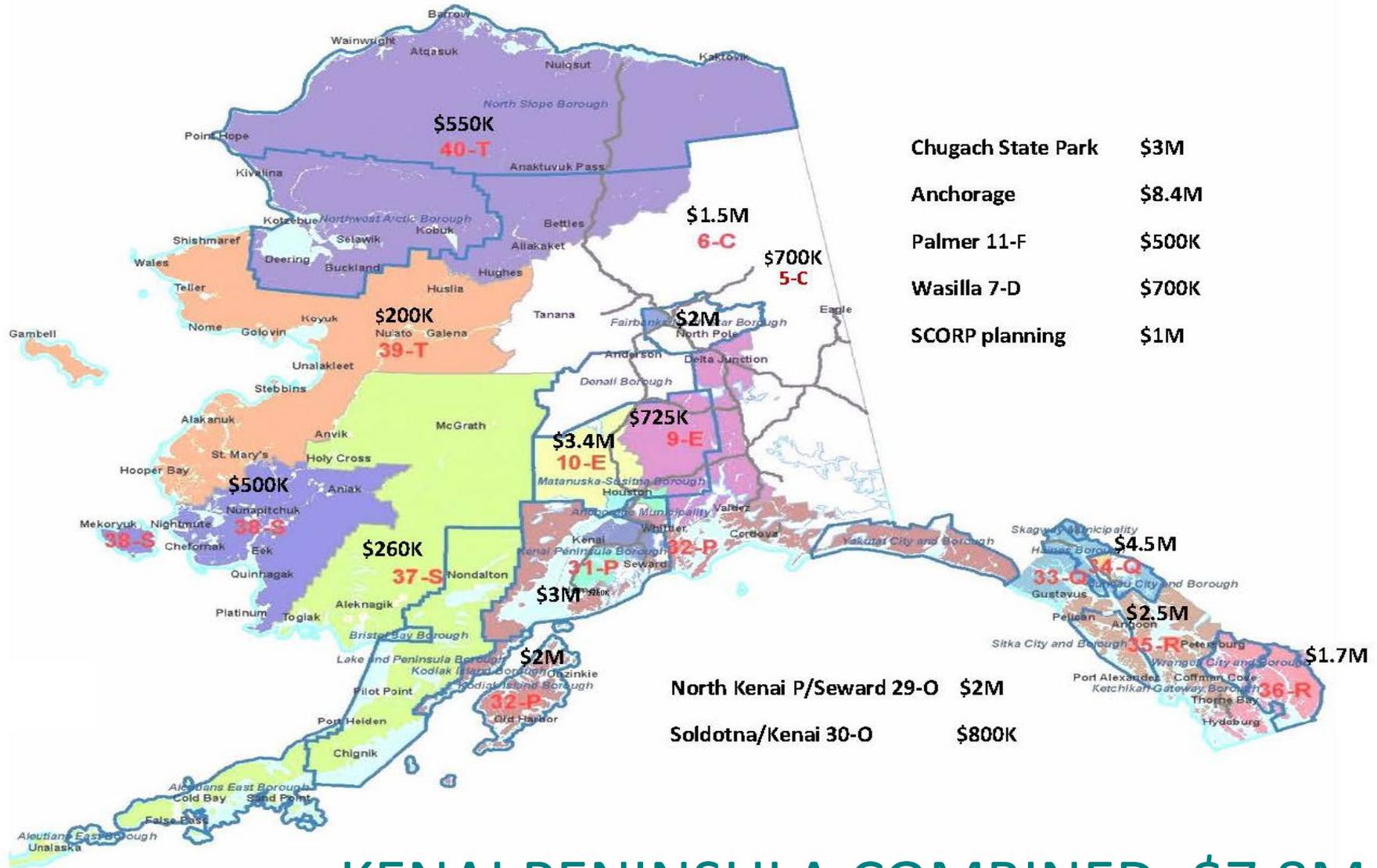
This is the amount confirmed for 2021 and going forward

LWCF is a 1:1 matching federal grant program for outdoor projects

**TELL OUR
LEGISLATORS
TO KEEP
LWCF IN
ALASKA'S
BUDGET**

LWCF Awards by District / Area 1966-2017

Total: \$40M



KENAI PENINSULA COMBINED: \$7.8M

Recommended Actions - LWCF

- **Approve the Governor's recommended AK FY2021 DNR Supplemental Budget** to accept \$3.4M of combined Federal FY 2019 & 2020 LWCF
 - \$900,000 in state funding to cover administrative costs and State match for federal funds
- **Approve the Governor's recommended AK FY2022 DNR Budget** to accept \$3.5M of FFY2021 LWCF
 - \$2.205M in state funding to cover administrative costs, the State's half of the required match (the other half to be matched by local/tribal governments), and help support the update of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

More information on LWCF: www.alaska-trails.org/funding-for-trails



The Alaska Trail Stewards Program volunteer crews – Chugach State Park

Thank you for your time!

www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative



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