

Agency: Department of Natural Resources**Project Title:****Project Type:** Maintenance and Repairs

Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation - Flattop Area

State Funding Requested: \$90,400
One-Time Need**House District:** Anchorage Areawide (11-27)**Brief Project Description:**

This project will provide for a preliminary design and construction of a high use sustainable hiking trail that climbs near 2,000 feet up the South Side of Flattop mountain located at the East end of Canyon Road.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$90,400
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$90,400)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:**No funds have been provided for this project.***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

This grant would provide a single, long term and stabilized trail and rehabilitate existing human made social trails. Professionally designed and constructed, this sustainable trail will provide improved access to this popular area while increasing commercial opportunity and public safety.

Chugach State Park maintenance crews will be improving parking for recreational park users at the Canyon Road trail head in 2014. Improving parking will increase use, eventually causing degradation to the trails that lead not only to the Rabbit lake area but up the South side of Flattop and Peak Two. The popularity of this trail head has grown substantially over the last several years (more than 30,700 visits in 2013) and the associated trails are largely braided and suffering from vegetative loss, trenching and significant erosion.

Last year, an estimated 1.3 million people used the Chugach State Park and the Flattop Mountain area is one of the highest use areas due to its easy access from Anchorage. Visitors using the Park provide substantial economic benefit to the state through their use of local tour operators or guides; outdoor equipment and clothing sales; as well as associated travel and accommodation revenue. A recent study showed outdoor recreation in Alaska resulted in 9.5 billion dollars in consumer spending, 92,000 jobs and \$711 million in state and local revenues. An example of that benefit is the Anchorage opening of "Cabella's" a nationally know outdoor equipment retailer.

It is anticipated that visitor use numbers will continue to increase placing additional pressure on natural resources, trail systems and parking.

This project is being submitted by the Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board. The Board advises the Division of

Parks and Outdoor Recreation on management of the Chugach State Park. This 15 person volunteer Board represents a multitude of park users including neighborhood groups/councils, anglers, bikers, skiers, equestrians, hikers, hunters, motorized and non-motorized enthusiasts and many others. One of the responsibilities of the Board is to participate in and comment on plans and programs that affect the Park.

This project was developed from public input received during development of the Chugach State Park Management Plan, Park Plan and Access Plan. The message from the users of this particular area have been clear that degradation of these social trails are taking away from their Park experience.

Why support this project? It will:

- reduce trail erosion and maintenance costs;
- diminish fall hazards; improve safety;
- promote livability; and
- stem conflicts with private property owners near park access points.

Project Timeline:

Expenditures will occur between June and October each year Beginning in June of 2014 and continue until September 2017 or until funds are expended.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

Letters of Support – Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project

There are 26 letters on file at present. The Board is seeking more.

Businesses

Anchorage Economic Development Corporation
Chugiak - Eagle River Chamber of Commerce
Visit Anchorage
Alaska Wildland Adventures
Alaska Trails, Inc.
Downtown Bicycle Rental and Flattop Mountain Shuttle
Eagle River Nature Center
Friends of Eagle River Nature Center
Salmon Berry Tours

Park User Groups

Alaska Mountain Rescue Group
Anchorage Snowmobile Club
Anchorage Petroleum Wives Club
Arctic Air Walkers
Happy Hikers
Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA)
Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage
Single Track Advocates (Mountain Bikers)

Community Councils

Eagle River Valley Community Council
Eklutna Valley Community Council
HALO – Area G Home and Landowners Organization
Huffman – O'Malley Community Council
Mid-Hillside and Hillside East Community Council
Turnagain Arm Community Council

Municipality of Anchorage

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission
Anchorage Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission
Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors