

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Girdwood Nordic Ski Club****Federal Tax ID: 300516522****Project Title:****Project Type: Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades**

Girdwood Nordic Ski Club - Girdwood Nordic Trail System Construction and Improvements

State Funding Requested: \$450,000
One-Time Need**House District: Anchorage Areawide (16-32)****Brief Project Description:**

The Girdwood Nordic Ski Club plans to finish the construction of the five kilometer, FIS rated trail system in the Girdwood valley. This project involves building the last two kilometers, creating sustainable grade and soil compaction along the trail system, and completing two final bridges.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$980,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$454,981)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$450,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$75,019

*Funding Details:**2008, Girdwood 20/20, \$30,000**2008, Municipality of Anchorage, \$50,000**2009, Parks and Recreation Nonprofit Grants, \$15,000**2009, The Byrne Family, \$50,000**2010, State of Alaska REC Grant, \$50,000**2010, National Park Service Challenge Grant, \$9828**2010, Parks and Recreation Nonprofit Grant, \$12,500**2010, Rasmuson Foundation, \$18,000**2010, Mooses Tooth, \$15,000**2011, State of Alaska REC Grant, \$50,000***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Girdwood Nordic Ski Club is currently constructing (tree clearing, stump removal, soil stabilization) a 5 kilometer multi-use loop with a 1 kilometer summer access route. Originally we planned for a 10 kilometer loop, but easement and cost restrictions have us starting with 5 kilometers. We have established the main center line, cleared trees, ground stumps, built 7 bridges, and stabilized soil with gravel excavated along the trail easement. This project, as we have learned, depends on these gravel deposits.

This fall, we plan to finish the trail development - development of final 2 kilometers, trail tread compaction, final grade, and

revegetation. The equipment needed (as estimated by our current contractor) are a 200 excavator, dump truck, compactor, and grader. Presently, the initial grades have been established, and held up to heavy equipment removing trees, and hauling gravel. Additional gravel will be applied in extremely wet areas, and for final trail shaping. We will also evaluate our drainage along the alignment, and make improvements as needed. This past fall the back-to-back flooding gave us concrete evidence of the gravel required to finish this trail. We will repair the damaged trail sections, and install culverts and a drainage ditch to create healthy hydrology.

We are creating an FIS standard trail (International Ski Federation) so future competition, both local and national, is a reality. A fantastic economic boost to our community. The unique features of this trail system include:

- 1) Hard Surfaced Trail. All previous Girdwood cross-country trails (6 kilometers) are located in Class A wetlands. A hard surface allows more user days as it will keep snow base longer, and allow grooming equipment in wet conditions.
- 2) Looped Trail System. Girdwood is comprised of many out-n-back trails, but no "trail systems". This trail system will provide two loops for safe, one-way recreational travel, and a connector loop to current trails.
- 3) Ski Only in Winter. The two culprits for damaging groomed ski trails are - feet and feces. This trail system will be maintained to provide world-class skiing. The winter use will be ski only - no dogs, and no foot traffic. The trails are open to all users in the summer and fall. (with the exception to equestrians)
- 4) A trail width of 5 meters. The planned width will allow large grooming equipment, Piston Bully, to properly maintain the winter grooming, allow simultaneous skate and classic ski traffic, and offer great line-of-sight to watch for wandering moose.

The estimate cost of Phase 2 is \$550,000. This is a rough estimate. Our contractors have become extremely familiar with the weather and soil extremes of constructing in Girdwood. They have encountered clay, silt, bedrock, gravel, and at one point said they watched "water run uphill". The work should take between 6 and 8 weeks. The cost estimates are directly from the equipment/labor costs including: culvert purchasing, gravel excavation, bridge repair, and soil stabilization.

We raised over \$450,000 for Phase 1, and will continue fundraising throughout this year. We plan to host a grand opening in December. This is an extremely unique opportunity for Girdwood. Most trail systems are designed around standing structures, through multiple property owners, or terminate next to established roads. The Glacier/Winner Creek Valley offers a blank slate. This trail system has been designed to highlight the valley's topographic features, accommodate for mass starts in future competition, and integrate with other multi-use trails. The ultimate benefits go beyond the trail design. The community of Girdwood is growing. We have seen the desire and need for well-maintained trails by the increasing number of year-round users. It is a social benefit for user groups to meet on local trails. In the winter, current cross-country trails are located in the open frozen bogs and wetlands. In ideal conditions, this provides great skiing with beautiful views. Being a temperate rain forest, the conditions are not always ideal. Averaging 90 inches of precipitation per year, too often these Girdwood trails are slushy (no grooming) or icy (no skiing). A firm-surfaced trail system, with proper gradient to shed water, will increase the number of user days.

The long-term benefit to Girdwood is both social and economical. As stated in the 2006 Winner Creek feasibility report, "Businesses tend to locate and stay in communities with well developed trails, and people are willing to pay almost 12% more for property located near or adjacent to trails". Using Anchorage as an example, the Nordic Ski Association (NSAA) has now hosted national and international cross-country ski events. These events have generated approximately 5.5 million dollars for the Anchorage Bowl. In Girdwood, this trail system could introduce additional business for The Alyeska Resort, bed & breakfasts, ski shops, and local restaurants. Whether residents and visitors are on alpine trails, cat-skiing trails, or cross-country trails, they all create a trail-based economy that weaves into the community's economic success.

The GNSC is dedicated to a healthy trail system for a healthy Girdwood. Along with the trail users, the volunteers to help

maintain these trails create a strong network of trail advocates within the community. This is an important aspect to pass onto the next generation -- community commitment to sustainable trails.

Project Timeline:

The construction will begin again in late July or August of 2012. The timeline is 6 to 8 weeks for this final phases. We plan to host a grand opening in December. We will pay the contractor net 30 days of the invoices received.

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

Girdwood Nordic Ski Club

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Deb Essex
Title: President
Address: PO Box 337
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
Phone Number: (907)229-1902
Email: deb@skigirdwood.org

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

Senator Cathy Giessel
716 W 4th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99501

February 6, 2012

Dear Senator Giessel,

The Girdwood Nordic Ski Club is developing a multi-use trail system that will benefit local residents; attract visitors, and host future competition for Nordic skiing - at national and international levels. This is an extremely unique trail system, as our valley is a temperate rainforest. This trail is designed to highlight the valley's topographic features, accommodate future mass starts in competition, and integrate with other local trails. The community of Girdwood is growing. We have seen the desire, and need for well-maintained trails by the increasing number of year-round users. In the winter, our current ski trails are located in open frozen bogs and wetlands. This new trail system will eliminate travel in the wetlands; increase user-days by providing hard surfaced, and properly graded trails wide enough for large grooming equipment.

We began constructing 5 kilometers of the proposed 10-kilometer system in August of 2010. Currently, we have finished 3 kilometers (tree clearing, soil stabilization) of development of these 5 kilometers. This summer, we will continue with Phase 2, consisting of sloping and grade work, beautification, and re-vegetation. We hope to have this trail system stabilized and ski able by winter 2012. We started with 5 kilometers to ensure sustainability.

We will maintain this trail system with user-based donations. We created a non-profit to operate and maintain the trails; modeled after the other 13 Nordic non-profits in Alaska. This is our second year of operation, and our donated funds look great for the sustainability of this organization, and trails. The trails have been designed by former Olympian Jim Galanes; who has helped design notable trails in the Anchorage area.

The original cost estimate for this trail was \$325,000. After four redesigns, and immense watershed challenges, this cost is rising towards \$980,000. We have raised \$454,000 through private donors and grants, and have \$75,000 pending. Our complete list of donors is:

2008, Girdwood 20/20, \$30,000
2008, Municipality of Anchorage, \$50,000
2009, Parks and Recreation Nonprofit Grants, \$15,000
2009, The Byrne Family, \$50,000
2010, State of Alaska REC Grant, \$50,000
2010, National Park Service Challenge Grant, \$9828
2010, Parks and Recreation Nonprofit Grant, \$12,500
2010, Rasmuson Foundation, \$18,000
2010, Mooses Tooth, \$15,000
2011, State of Alaska REC Grant, \$50,000
2011, Kenai Mountain Turnagain Arm CCA, \$10,000
2011, U.S. Forest Service RAC Grant, \$21,800
2011, Alaska Ski Education Foundation, \$2000
2012, State of Alaska REC Grant, \$50,000
2010, Private Donations, \$70,853

We are coordinating with the Anchorage Parks and Recreations, the U.S. Forest Service, the Alyeska Resort, and the local Girdwood Trails Committee. With additional funds, and continual training, our mission is not only building a world-class trails system...but encourage responsible use through advocacy, education, and stewardship. Along with the 9 volunteer groomers we support, we have also contracted a local landscape designer, certified arborist, 6 trail builders, two local artists for creating signage, and a local welder for grooming repairs. We have hosted both ski lessons and ski-waxing lessons. Along with the economic benefits, these trails will help create a healthy, 4-season destination for Girdwood.

The requested funds will be primarily spent on construction. Aside from the 5 kilometer trail system, we have designed a dedicated trailhead, two connections to existing trails, and three lookout areas for benches. The most important of these is the trailhead. Girdwood lacks any dedicated trailhead, and our designed parking area is centrally located and can be added to the bus shuttle route.

We will spend the requested funds on: sloping and drainage work, re-vegetation, trail signage, trailhead construction, a final survey of trail alignment, and solid trail connections.

We are working with a contractor that is saving us thousands of dollars by integrating all local materials back into the trails. Thus far, we have no expense in importing gravel or material for the trail. We are dovetailing all construction with other local projects to save on travel expense of heavy equipment to and from Anchorage. The funds will be used on site. Actual construction, survey, and sign installation. All other planning and design work has been completed, or will be donated by volunteer hours.

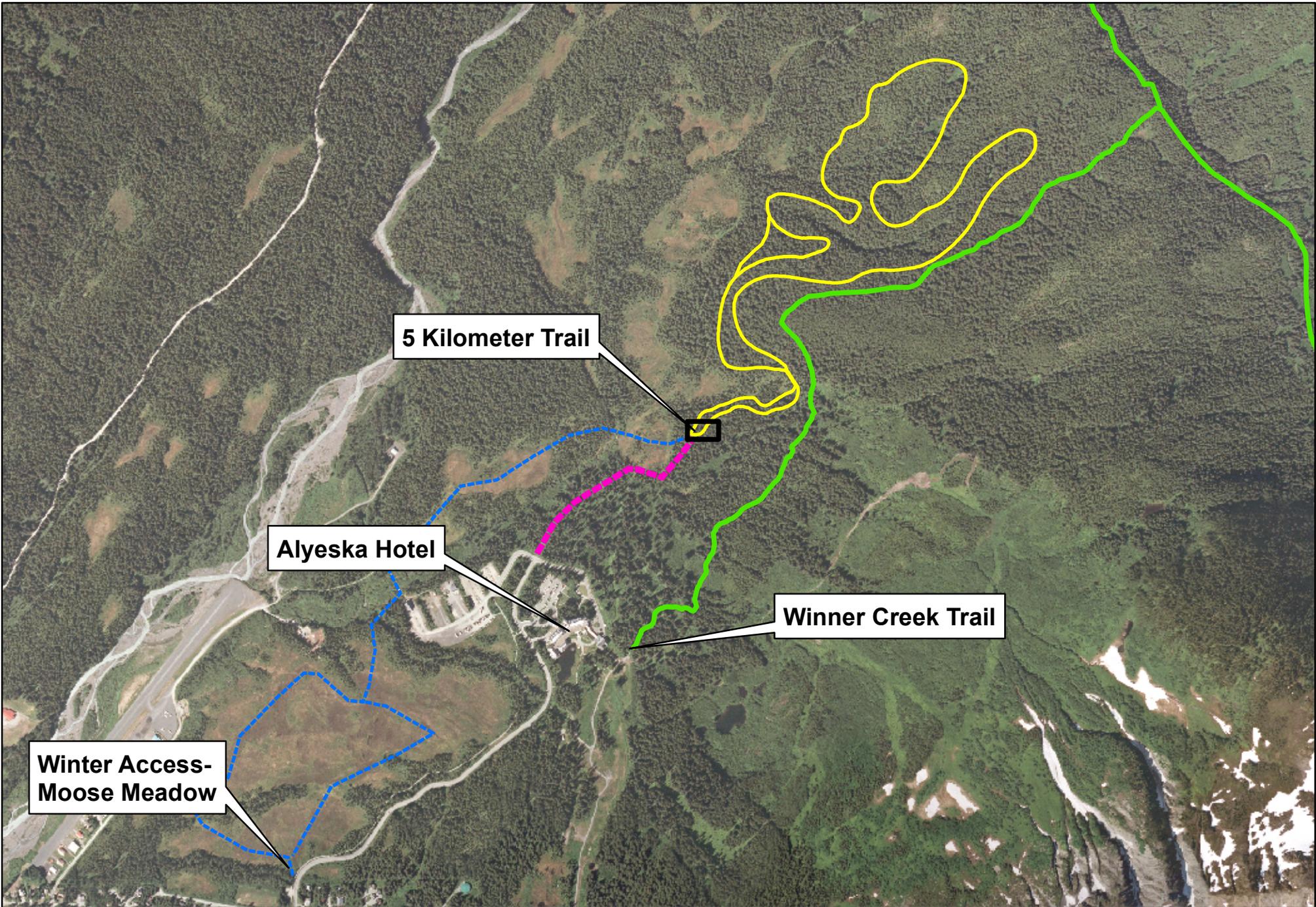
Finally, we have discovered that these trails will also play an important role in safety and rescue. This fall, there have been two emergency rescues on adjacent trails. Those trails are too narrow for rescue crews 4-wheelers or snow machines, so the Girdwood Fire Department would now be able to save time, and coordinate on-site by using the newly developed Nordic trails. As a result, we have created an inter-valley effort for new mapping, and new safety plans for all trails. We have also created three short-cuts within the Nordic loop for additional safety and shorten travel in case of emergency.

We thank you for your consideration of this project funding. We invite you to come enjoy our abundant snow and tour the completed trail section. Feel free to contact me, and we would be happy to give you a guide tour. Just think, Girdwood could host BOTH Alpine and Nordic portions of the 2016 NCAA Championships with a completed trail system.

Sincerely,



Deb Essex
President, Girdwood Nordic Ski Club
Box 337
Girdwood, AK 99587
deb@skigirdwood.org



5 Kilometer Trail

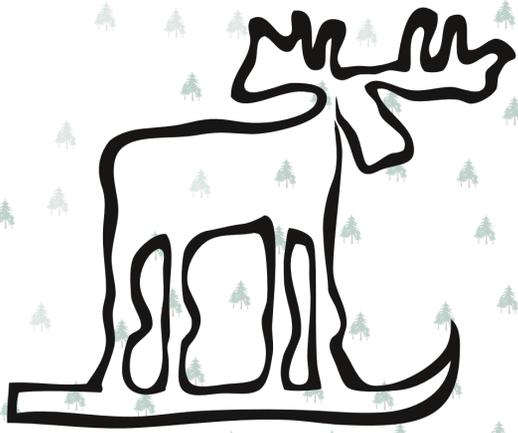
Alyeska Hotel

Winner Creek Trail

**Winter Access-
Moose Meadow**

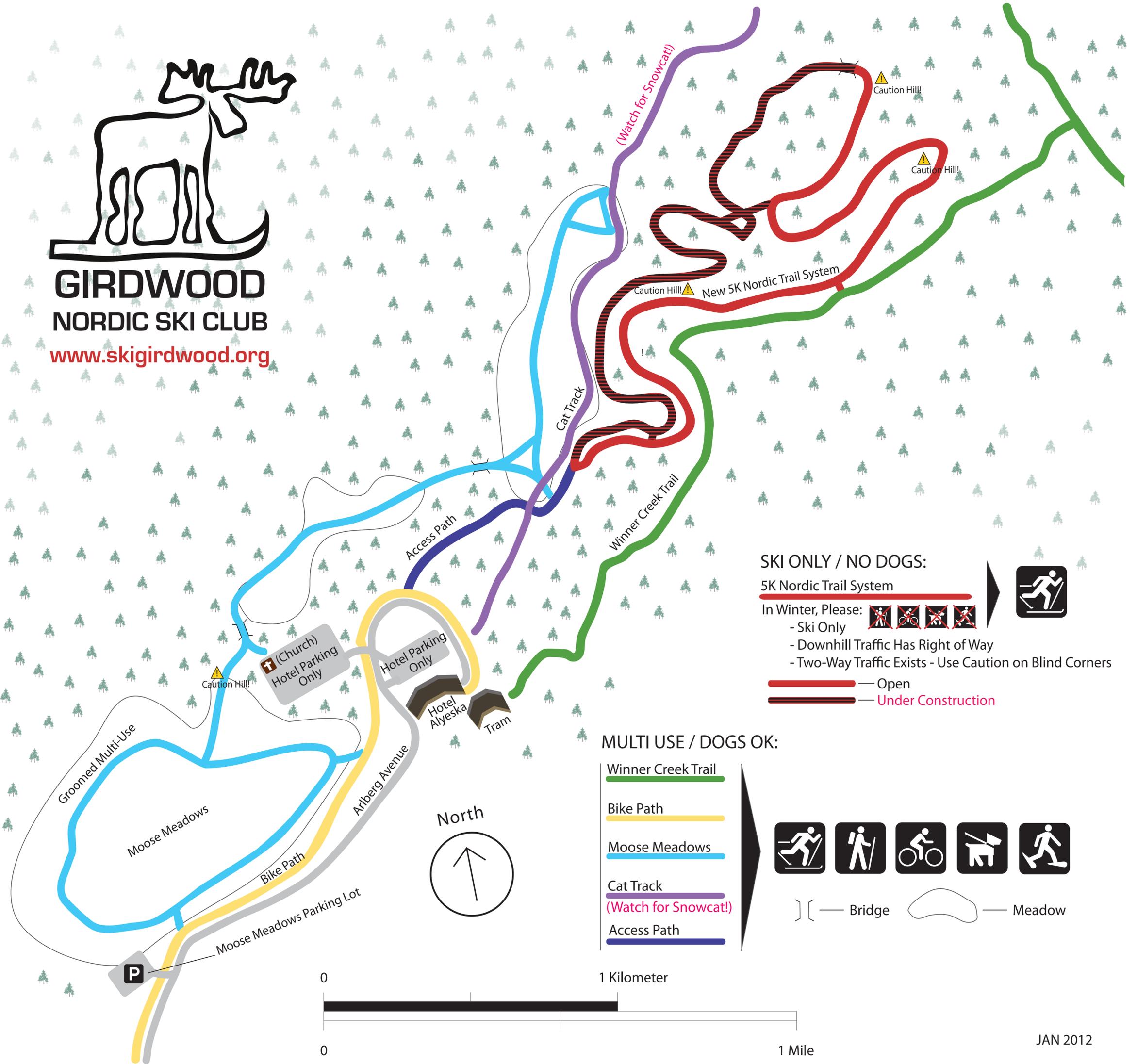


**Girdwood Nordic Ski Club
Nordic Ski Trail Development
Phase 1**



**GIRDWOOD
NORDIC SKI CLUB**

www.skigirdwood.org



SKI ONLY / NO DOGS:

5K Nordic Trail System

In Winter, Please:

- Ski Only
- Downhill Traffic Has Right of Way
- Two-Way Traffic Exists - Use Caution on Blind Corners

- Open
- Under Construction

MULTI USE / DOGS OK:

- Winner Creek Trail
- Bike Path
- Moose Meadows
- Cat Track
- (Watch for Snowcat!)
- Access Path



- Bridge
- Meadow

JAN 2012

WELCOME TO THE GIRDWOOD WINTER TRAILS