Approved - Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)  
Meeting Minutes 2/3-4/2015  

ORTAB Members Present:  
Jeff Budd - Chair - Represents Southeast Alaska / Non-Motorized  
Mike Rearden - Represents Western / Southwest Alaska  
Ron Lurk - Represents Anchorage / Motorized / Diversified  
Mickey Todd - Represents Motorized Trail Users  
Seth Adams - Represents Fairbanks Area / Northern Area  

DNR Staff Present:  
Claire LeClair - Alaska State Parks, Deputy Director and Chief of Field Operations  
Darcy Harris - Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator  
Steve Neel - Recreational Trails Grants Administrator  
Jean Ayers - Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants Administrator  
Justin Wholey - Alaska State Trails Program, Resource Specialist  
Tom Kain - Park Ranger, Seward  

Public:  
Rick Northey - Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers, President  
Janice Northey - Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers, Secretary  
Steve Cleary - Alaska Trails, Executive Director  
Jack Kreinheder - Trail Mix Inc., President / Juneau Freewheelers Bike Club, Vice President  
Heather Rice - National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program  
Melinda Eggleston - Delta Junction Trails Association, Chair  
Bill Holt - Tsalteshi Trails Association, Maintenance and Operations Manager  
Chuck Kaucic - Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation, District Manager  
Kim Sollien - Great Land Trust, Mat-Su Program Director  
Geoffrey Orth - Stray Dogs LLC  
Kirsten Laulainen - Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Trails Program Coordinator  
Jack Mosby  

Tuesday, February 3, 2015  

Introductions  
ORTAB members, DNR staff, and the public introduced themselves. Some joined the meeting via teleconference. New board member Seth Adams was in attendance. Channel 2 News interviewed ORTAB Chair Jeff Budd before the meeting began.
**Board Elections**

**Motion:**
Ron Lurk nominated Jeff Budd for the Chair position again. Mike Rearden seconded the nomination.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

Jeff Budd is Chair once again.

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**Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) General Discussion**

Jean Ayers (LWCF Grants Administrator) explained a little about the LWCF program. Congress passed a law to set aside or create new outdoor-recreation opportunities. Since program inception (1965), Alaska has had over 300 LWCF projects with 35 million dollars invested. The LWCF program has required an inventory of recreation resources available and recreation needs in Alaska; this is done every 5 years with surveys and is encapsulated in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Darcy Harris explained that Recreational Trails (RecTrails) grants and LWCF grants are mandated to be part of a local land-use/management plan or be identified in the SCORP.

Jean Ayers also explained that State of Alaska grants and non-profit/community grants are split into separate categories, and don’t compete against each other. She also mentioned that there is less money available than there is money requested for this round.

Before the ORTAB discussed the individual projects, Jean Ayers thanked the board for their comments and sending in their scores. She also noted that numerical scores were only a starting point for the boards’ discussion and they may consider other factors while discussing and ranking proposals.

One board member commented that returning applicants have an advantage over new applicants in their score from ORTAB, although both may be equally able to excel at executing a project. The member also noted that the LWCF grants could be scored more fairly if the applicant questionnaire and score sheet were better aligned.

One board member asked if the ORTAB was required to fully fund the projects they approved. Jean Ayers answered no, but said it was sometimes difficult or impossible for grantees to complete their projects with less funding than their requested amounts.
LWCF Projects Discussion

(Projects are listed in the order they were discussed, not by a ranking.)

1. Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Phase IV
Applicant: Fairbanks North Star Borough
Average ORTAB Score: 125
Federal Request: $91,550
ORTAB Discussion:
One board member liked that the grant was easy to read and involved children. Another member said that the Tanana Lakes were very popular for recreation.
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: Yes

2. Duldida Park Upgrade & Accessibility Improvements
Applicant: Municipality of Anchorage
Average ORTAB Score: 114
Federal Request: $106,023
ORTAB Discussion:
One member questioned if the project was really ready, because construction wasn’t scheduled until 2016. Another member noted many hedge words in the application. One ORTAB member said they took points off for the environmental inspection.
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: Yes

3. Cedars Trail Expansion
Applicant: Metlakatla Indian Community
Average ORTAB Score: 102
Federal Request: $50,000
ORTAB Discussion:
One member liked the special population designation. Several members had concerns that there was no environmental report. Also, one member noted that there was no evidence of budget, staff, or plan information.
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: Yes
4. Tennis Court Rehab
Applicant: Girdwood Service Area
Average ORTAB Score: 113
Federal Request: $125,000
ORTAB Discussion:
One member liked that tennis, basketball, and skateboarding may take place, as well as tennis. Another member was concerned that the number of users were not reflected, and the project was the most expensive. One member mentioned that the tennis courts could only be used seasonally, and preferred the year-round Metlakatla project (Cedars Trail Expansion).
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: No

5. Matanuska River Parcel Purchase
Applicant: City of Palmer
Average ORTAB Score: 99
Federal Request: $85,000
ORTAB Discussion:
One member speculated that the property could be purchased for development, if not by LWCF. There was a concern about purchasing property in a floodplain, and members questioned if it was acceptable in the LWCF program. Another member noted that since land acquisition only has medium priority in scoring, that this project wasn’t likely to get selected based on this scoring.
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: Yes, but at the reduced amount of $80,696.

6. Butte Summit Acquisition
Applicant: Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Average ORTAB Score: 104
Federal Request: $60,000
ORTAB Discussion:
One member said that they scored this project high because of the erosion problems it addressed, and its applicability to the visible corridors category. Another member wanted more information about this project and noted inconsistencies in the application. An ORTAB member asked if the project intended to subdivide and sell the land, because the application was unclear to them. Kim Sollien from Great Land Trust clarified that the intent of the grant is to put a conservation easement on the land and to never develop it.
ORTAB Recommended for Funding: Yes, but at the reduced amount of $50,000.
Motion: Jeff Budd moved to fully fund Tanana Lakes (Rec. Area Phase IV), Duldida Park (Upgrade & Accessibility Improvements), and the Cedars Trail Expansion. The Matanuska River Parcel Purchase will be (recommended to be) funded at $80,696, and the Butte Summit Acquisition is to (recommended to) be funded at $50,000. Mike Rearden seconded.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

The ORTAB decided to only partially fund the Matanuska River Parcel Purchase and the Butte Summit Acquisition because of a shortage of available grant funds.

The ORTAB noted that there was enough money to fund all of the LWCF projects submitted by the State of Alaska. These projects were all submitted by Alaska State Parks, Design & Construction. The projects included Isaak Walton KRSMA Water Well Replacement, Baranof Castle SHS Furnishings, South Denali Trails, Chilkat State Park Campground Rehabilitation, and Byers Lake Suspension Bridge.

Motion: Mike Rearden moved to accept all of the (State of Alaska) projects as they are. Ron Lurk seconded.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

The following is a list of LWCF projects that have been recommended for funding by the Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board. Funding recommendation by the ORTAB does not guarantee that a project will be funded. The Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will consider the ORTAB’s recommendations and decide which projects to tentatively approve. It is then up to the National Park Service whether or not to approve individual projects.

Non-State LWCF Projects Recommended for Funding (but not officially approved)
- Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Phase IV
- Duldida Park Upgrade & Accessibility Improvements
- Cedars Trail Expansion
- Matanuska River Parcel Purchase (partial funding)
- Butte Summit Acquisition (partial funding)

State LWCF Projects Recommended for Funding (but not officially approved)
- Isaak Walton KRSMA Water Well Replacement
- Baranof Castle SHS Furnishings
- South Denali Trails
- Chilkat State Park Campground Rehabilitation
- Byers Lake Suspension Bridge
General Discussion by DNR Staff

Alaska State Parks Deputy Director, Claire LeClair, spoke to the board and announced that Ben Ellis would continue to be the Director of Alaska State Parks. She also said that the RecTrails administration matching funds are still included in the Governor’s budget.

Steve Neel explained that RecTrails was funded for only two-thirds of the current federal fiscal year, but the remaining third of the year may be funded at a later date (to fund the entire fiscal year). He also explained that there were more dollars requested than funding available for both funding scenarios (funding for two-thirds of the federal fiscal year and funding for the full year).

Steve Neel also noted that federal regulations had become more strict for the Alaska State Trails Program and its grantees. He said that the predicted end-date of a project must be adhered to, and that extensions from Federal Highways would likely not be given, even if there are funds left in the grant. He also said that “future-match” would not be allowed by federal highways for equipment-purchases. Steve Neel explained that this is when a large piece of equipment is purchased, and matching funds are labor to be carried out in the future. He said that one solution for equipment purchase is to write the labor into the scope of the project.

Steve Neel also explained that the “Buy America” provision would be enforced beginning with projects in the current applicant pool. This provision requires American Steel to be used in manufactured products purchased with RecTrails dollars. He said that it had been nearly impossible for manufacturers he had spoken with to indicate if steel was from American manufacturers; he noted that this is problematic. The only solution is to file for a waiver with Federal Highways, which no applicants have done as of yet.

Rick Northey stated that although he would prefer a foreign-made PistenBully to be purchased with his grant funds, he would gladly accept an American-made Tucker if necessary.

RecTrails Projects from Non-State Entities

(Projects are listed in the order they were discussed, not by a ranking.)

1. Edmonds Lake / Mirror Lake Singletrack - Phase 1
   Applicant: Alaska Trails, Inc.
   Category: Non-Motorized
   Funds Requested / Match: $49,000 / $12,250
   Land Owner(s): Municipality of Anchorage
   Project Discussion:
   The board generally liked this project, although one member thought $50/hr. was expensive for wages.
2. South Fork Overlook Trail Improvement

Applicant: Anchorage Nordic Ski Club
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $19,838 / $3,967
Land Owner(s): Chugach State Park
Project Discussion: One member noted that there was no letter from a youth group, so no points were given.

3. Restoring KBay’s Interpretive Trails - Phase 2

Applicant: Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $22,704 / $5,791
Land Owner(s): Seldovia Native Association and Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
Project Discussion:
One member commented that this is a great project, with great maps, that teaches trail-building.

4. Liewer Community Trail

Applicant: Delta Junction Trails Association
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $44,264 / $13,626
Land Owner(s): Ronald R. Liewer and Delta / Greely School District
Project Discussion:
One member thought the heavy equipment time was excessive, although Melinga Eggleston noted that the time estimate was obtained from a trail-builder.

5. Eaglecrest Mountain Bike Flow Trail

Applicant: Juneau Freewheelers Cycle Club
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $50,000 / $12,500
Land Owner(s): Eaglecrest Ski Area (City and Borough of Juneau)
Project Discussion:
Jack Kreinheder clarified that match is to come Eaglecrest Ski Area in the form of crushed rock from their quarry.
6. Skyline Ridge Park Trail Restoration
Applicant: Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Rec.
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $50,000 / $12,500
Land Owner(s): Fairbanks North Star Borough

Project Discussion:
One member noted that the labor cost per hour seemed high. Another member explained that this is a popular area for motorized use (4x4 trucks), even though it isn’t allowed. Motorized users have been known to remove barricades to access the area. The member also said that there were plans to change the allowed-uses to include motorized recreation.

7. Koponen Homestead Trail
Applicant: Friends of the Koponen Homestead
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $35,428.25 / $8,857.06
Land Owner(s): Joan Koponen and Niilo Koponen (estate of)

Project Discussion:
Geoffrey Orth clarified that even though they have the minimum five year public access, but the Koponen’s have a long history of allowing public access on their land.

8. North Pole Beaver Springs Trail Upgrades
Applicant: Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $26,871.21 / $6,717.80
Land Owner(s): Fairbanks North Star Borough

Project Discussion:
One concern by a board member was that the project was expensive for improving such a short length of trail. Another member questioned if this is just a park beautification project.
9. **Wasilla Creek Palmer Hay Flats Refuge Trail**

**Applicant:** Great Land Trust  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $50,000 / $10,000  
**Land Owner(s):** DNR, Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge  

**Project Discussion:**  
Kim Sollien clarified that there was no labor in the budget, because there were other funding sources paying for that portion of the project. She also explained that an elevated boardwalk would be built instead of the bog bridge mentioned in the project narrative; the trail would end at the wetland, and trail markers would guide winter users to the trail on the other side of Wasilla Creek. Darcy explained to Kim that this is a change in scope from her original project, and that since the project was in the planning stages at the time of application submittal, it was acting as a placeholder, and unfair to other applicants.

**Motion:**  
Mike Rearden moved to remove this application for consideration for this cycle, and encourage you (Kim Sollien) to reapply next year with your new scope of work so that we can reconsider it, because in fairness to the other applicants we haven’t had a chance to review what you actually intend to do at this point. Ron Lurk seconded.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

The Wasilla Creek Palmer Hay Flats Refuge Trail project was removed from consideration from this grant cycle.

For future applications, one member advised the applicant to describe more users than just elementary school students, because their use will likely be limited.

10. **HoWL Trail Days across the Bay!**

**Applicant:** HoWL, Inc.  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $50,000 / $12,500  
**Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska, DNR, Division of Parks  

**Project Discussion:**  
One ORTAB member liked the layout, maps, and budget. Another member noted that the supervisor was valued less than the volunteer labor for the kids, which seemed odd; the member also thought that a paid trail crew could likely work more efficiently than 85 to 135 volunteers performing a few hours of work each. Another member noted the value of youth development in this project, and that the trail work wasn’t its only goal.
11. **Beaver Lake Trail Improvements - Foot Trail**

**Applicant:** Kodiak Island Borough  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $45,456 / $11,364  
**Land Owner(s):** Kodiak Island Borough

**Project Discussion:**
Some board members thought this application seemed incomplete. One member liked the project, but noted that the problem of rogue ATVs was cited in the application, but no solutions were offered.

12. **Government Peak Trail Lighting Project**

**Applicant:** Mat-Su Ski Club  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $50,000 / $12,500  
**Land Owner(s):** Matanuska-Susitna Borough

**Project Discussion:**
A few members mentioned that they were unsure what the $50,000 was paying for, because specifics were not mentioned in the application. Some members also thought the budget was inadequate. Darcy Harris stated that Federal Highways would not accept the budget in its current state.

Edward Strabel clarified that there are multiple funding donors, and that RecTrails would pay for a portion of it. Darcy Harris explained that the budget and narrative would have to be filled in with specifics, for the grant to be acceptable by Federal Highways.

The ORTAB told Edward Strabel that they were not comfortable having his project in the application pool anymore, because of the deficiencies in the budget and scope. The project was removed from the review pool.

13. **Hungry Point Trail Extension**

**Applicant:** Petersburg Borough Parks and Rec.  
**Category:** Diversified  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $41,750 / $22,500  
**Land Owner(s):** Petersburg Borough

**Project Discussion:**
One member thought that the budget was good, but 3 weeks of design for a 3 mile trail seemed excessive. Another member thought that the match seemed excessive for the project, and mentioned that there is much more administration and planning than actual trail work. Steve Neel noted that the amount of match quoted on the application must be accounted for (with more paperwork), so it is easier for applicants to put the minimum match needed.
Motion:
Seth Adams moved to advise the applicants (Petersburg Borough Parks and Rec.) to reduce design and layout matching-funds by $12,062.50 in order to meet only the minimum match. Mike Rearden seconded.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

The applicant will be advised to reduce their match on the budget to the minimum required level.

14. Sitka Storm Damage
Applicant: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $40,041 / $9,605
Land Owner(s): City and Borough of Sitka and United States Forest Service
Project Discussion:
Steve Neel mentioned that he had hiked the trail and it was wonderful.

15. A Picture Perfect Hike: An Interpretive Trail
Applicant: Takshanuk Watershed Council
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $20,111 / $5,028
Land Owner(s): Haines Borough
Project Discussion:
One board member noted that trail work wasn’t planned to begin until FY16. Steve Neel mentioned that this applicant currently had an open FY13 project (Pullen Creek). He said that they had spent about 5% administratively, and the project must closed by June 30th. One member commented that they could resubmit next year and still build the trail in FY16.

Motion:
Seth Adams moved to tell the Takshanuk Watershed Council to resubmit for next year. Jeff Budd seconded. *This motion was withdrawn* and several members lowered their scores for this project.

Takshanuk Watershed Council’s project stayed in the applicant pool.
16. Tsalteshi Trailhead Improvement Project

Applicant: Tsalteshi Trails Association
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $50,000 / $12,500
Land Owner(s): Kenai Peninsula Borough

Project Discussion:
One board member liked the ADA toilets and youth involvement. Another member liked how the application mentioned using equipment form a former RecTrails grant. One ORTAB member thought that purchasing toilets and a snowmobile with the same grant was odd.

17. Denali State Park YCC

Applicant: Upper Susitna Soil & Water Conservation District
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $41,147.52 / $10,344
Land Owner(s): State of Alaska

Project Discussion:
Board members had several complaints about this application including high administrative costs for work to be accomplished, and no letters of support from individuals or a youth group. Also, using a currently-owned tent for matching funds seemed inappropriate to one member.

18. Government Peak Singletrack Phase 2

Applicant: Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $39,562.50 / $9,928.75
Land Owner(s): Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Project Discussion:
Board members noted that there was not enough detail in the project description, and the environmental review was old.

19. Matanuska River Park Access Trail

Applicant: Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $34,257.30 / $8,680
Land Owner(s): Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Project Discussion:
One board member thought the projected-use numbers seemed high, and questioned why a wall-ride feature couldn’t be built in Alaska (rather that shipping one up from the lower 48 with the high freight costs). Another member thought that renting a skid steer for seven days for a 1/10th mile trail seemed excessive.
20. **CHCH Snow Cat**

**Applicant:** Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers  
**Category:**  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $100,000 / $ 25,000  
**Land Owner(s):** N/A  
**Project Discussion:**

One board member thought that the support letters were great, and that the number of users were impressive. Rick Northey explained that the Cabin Hoppers were currently using old ski-grooming machines. He also mentioned that he visited the Tucker assembly plant in Oregon, and a PistenBully representative in the lower 48. He said that the PistenBully was the best machine for their (Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers’) purposes.

**Wednesday, February 4, 2015**

To satisfy the 30% Non-Motorized, 40% Diversified, and 30% Motorized requirements, and to spend as much of the RecTrails money as possible, the board moved projects into different categories.

**Motion:**

Mickey Todd moved to move the Watermelon Trail (Remediation application) to the diversified category. Mike Rearden seconded.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

21. **Jim Creek Motorized Recreation Trails**

**Applicant:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough  
**Category:** Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $100,000 / $25,000  
**Land Owner(s):** Matanuska-Susitna Borough  
**Project Discussion:**

One board member thought it was good that the project would try to keep ATVs on trails. Another member thought that $100,000 was a lot of money to work on only 3 miles of trail, but knew that trail-hardening could be expensive. Another concern by an ORTAB member was that the tree-removal schedule was in conflict with Fish & Game’s recommendations.
22. **Mid-Valley Motorized Trail Improvement**

**Applicant:** Mid-Valley Trail Club, Inc.

**Category:** Diversified

**Funds Requested / Match:** $17,200 / $4,300

**Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska

**Project Discussion:**

One board member mentioned that detail about the trail work is vague, and it sounded like the group just wanted some new equipment. Another member said that the Ravine Trail is a safety hazard, and it needs to be fixed; the member had seen many different user-groups on the trail (motorized and non-motorized).

**Motion:**

Seth Adams moved to move this project (Mid-Valley Motorized Trail Improvement) from the motorized (category) to the diversified category. Ron Lurk seconded.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

23. **Eska West ATV Trail Phase 2**

**Applicant:** Mat-Su Trails Council Inc.

**Category:** Motorized

**Funds Requested / Match:** $100,000 / $25,000

**Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska, DNR, Division of Mining, Land, and Water

**Project Discussion:**

Steve Neel noted that Phase II cannot begin until Phase I is complete, and that the applicant had spent about $22,000 of $50,000 on Phase I so far. One board member mentioned that the budget was not very good and there were no support letters from individuals.

24. **Bonfire Lake to Happy River Trail Maintenance**

**Applicant:** Iditarod Trail Committee

**Category:** Diversified

**Funds Requested / Match:** $100,000 / $25,800

**Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska

**Project Discussion:**

One member thought that the applicant was really just applying for equipment. Another member thought that the main benefit was to the race, and that there weren’t many locals using this section of trail. One ORTAB member suggested partially funding this project at $50,000. This would allow the applicant to purchase the snowmachines or the Centaur.

The board decided to move the project from the motorized category to the diversified category and fund them at $50,000.
25. **17b Easement Trail Tread Repairs**

**Applicant:** Island Trails Network, Inc  
**Category:** Diversified  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $19,100 / $7,762  
**Land Owner(s):** Ouzinkie Native Corporation  

**Project Discussion:**
One board member thought that an organization renting their own ATV for match didn’t seem legitimate. Another member questioned how the geotex was originally laid, because it now needed to be replaced so soon. This project was flagged by the board to be put into the diversified category.

**Motion:**
Mickey Todd moved to move Island Trails to the diversified category (from the motorized category). Ron Lurk seconded.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

26. **ATV/Salmon Stream Crossing Training/Education**

**Applicant:** Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District (WS&WCD)  
**Category:** Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $6,500 / $1,300  
**Land Owner(s):** N/A  

**Project Discussion:**
Some of the ORTAB members were confused about the specifics of the Project; Chuck Kaucic (WS&WCD District Manager) was able to answer their questions. He explained that he received a legislative grant for assessing salmon stream crossings in Matanuska Valley, and that grant was related to this grant application. He explained that his project was to train government, nonprofits, community groups, students, and locals, where and how to design salmon-stream crossings for ATVs, and also to discuss the latest technology and assessment tools.

27. **Mat Valley Moose Range Trail Bridges Upgrade**

**Applicant:** Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District  
**Category:** Diversified  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $51,685.15 / $10,358  
**Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska  

**Project Discussion:**
One member noted that there was only one bid for equipment, and not the required three. Another member didn’t think that Boy Scout labor was worth $21/hr.
28. Watermelon Trail Remediation
Applicant: Homer Soil & Water Conservation District
Category: Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $ 36,630.95 / $ 10,212
Land Owner(s): Kenai Peninsula Borough and DNR Division of ML&W
Project Discussion:
An ORTAB member commented that this was one of the three trails between the head of Kachemak Bay and Ninilchik that had legal easements. Another board member thought that they didn’t provide a very good description of trail-users.

Public Comment Period
Jack Kreinheder (President of Trail Mix Inc. and Vice President of the Juneau Freewheelers Cycle Club) wanted to comment in anticipation of possible applicant-performance scoring for next year. We (Trail Mix) were frustrated by the changes that Federal Highways have made in the last couple of years. Federal Highways started requiring much more specific information for invoices; one of our invoices was rejected for our Mount Juneau project, and Federal Highway threatened to de-obligate funding for the project. At this time we had completed 80% of our project. Because of the rejected invoice, Federal Highways’ system showed that we had not done work in the last year and they threatened to de-obligate the grant funds. In that scenario we would have had to pay back Federal Highways $35,000.
Steve Neel said Federal Highways had issues with their payroll accuracy, legibility, and match recording, but the main problem was the timeline; it was taking 6 months to a year to receive invoices from Trail Mix.

RecTrails Projects from State Entities
(Projects are listed in the order they were discussed, not by a ranking.)

29. Bird Valley Motorized Trail-Maintenance
Applicant: Chugach State Park
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $35,066.25 / $5,293.94
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One board member mentioned that there were no support letters. Another member thought that the State shouldn’t be required to get support letters because the State Park Advisory Boards are involved. Another ORTAB member also thought that a letter from the advisory board would be the perfect solution.
Motion:
Mickey Todd moved to move Bird Valley to the diversified section (from the motorized category). Ron Lurk seconded.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

30. Northern Trail Rehabilitation
Applicant: Alaska State Parks, Northern Region
Category: Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $12,201 / $1,224
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One member noted that these trails are very popular and receive lots of use.

31. Stiles Creek Trail
Applicant: Alaska State Parks, Northern Region
Category: Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $24,932 / $2,999
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One board member thought that one day a week for project management seemed appropriate. Another member thought that a budget narrative could have helped this application.

32. Northern Area Training & Assessment
Applicant: Alaska State Parks, Northern Region
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $8,270 / $1,224
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
Steve Neel explained that trail crews used to receive a lump sum to spend as needed; now regions are required to submit individual grants for projects. He also explained that trail crews are allowed (by Federal Highways) to assess trail conditions and receive training.
33. **Lower Chatanika ATV Trail Map and Brochure**

**Applicant:** Alaska Div. of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Interpretation and Education  
**Category:** Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $50,000 / $4,963  
**Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks  

**Project Discussion:**

One member said the requirement of a mock-up for a brochure seemed unnecessary, because it asked applicants to essentially create the brochure ahead of time. Other members thought that the cost for the project was high, the area seemed to have low-use, and that there was a lot of time budgeted to write a small amount of required text. One member though that the applicant may just want a new camera.

34. **Battery Point Trail Hardening**

**Applicant:** State of Alaska / DNR / DPOR (Haines)  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $47,540 / $4,532  
**Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks  

**Project Discussion:**

One member commented that the application was very brief. Another ORTAB member questioned if they really need two mechanical wheelbarrows for this project. Another member thought that a beam saw would be unnecessary, and other tools parks likely had could work almost as well. One member made a comment that the State should mention the future work that new pieces of equipment will accomplish (after the current grant).

35. **Kachemak Bay State Park: Saddle Trail Re-Route**

**Applicant:** Alaska State Parks, Kenai Area, South District, Kachemak Bay State Park  
**Category:** Non-Motorized  
**Funds Requested / Match:** $49,996.25 / $4,963.20  
**Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks  

**Project Discussion:**

One member asked about the use of motorized-wheelchairs on the Saddle Trail, because it was mentioned in the application (in regards to scoring points for helping people with disabilities). Another member confirmed that this would be impossible.
36. Angel Rocks Rehabilitation
Applicant: Alaska State Park, Northern Region
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $22,515 / $2,386
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One member commented that this trail was eroded, needed work, and that the cost of this grant is a bargain.

37. Middle Fork of Campbell Creek Trail Improvement
Applicant: Chugach State Park
Category: Non-Motorized
Funds Requested / Match: $32,942 / $3,233.25
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One member commented that it would be nice to have a support letter from the advisory board.

38. Reclamation of Miller Point Lower Access Trail
Applicant: DNR / DPOR / Kodiak District
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $ 35,695 / $ 3,295.50
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
Two members though that the grant didn’t seem complete. One ORTAB member thought that this was just a grant for a tractor, and not a trail project, because it only mentioned creating 200 feet of trail.

39. Trail Repairs & Equipment
Applicant: Mat-Su Area, Denali State Park
Category: Diversified
Funds Requested / Match: $ 47,885 / $ 4,776.39
Land Owner(s): Alaska State Parks
Project Discussion:
One member commented that the math on the budget was off and the project seemed incomplete.

Steve Neel explained that the Mat-Su office consistently turned in billing requests that he could not send to Federal Highways the first time around. They currently have three projects still open, and adding new projects would raise the possibility of more complications.
### 40. Red Shirt Lake Trail Repairs

- **Applicant:** Division of Parks, Mat-Su, Nancy Lake
- **Category:** Non-Motorized
- **Funds Requested / Match:** $40,198 / $4,010
- **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks

**Project Discussion:**

One ORTAB member liked the mention of future-use for the motorized-toter.

### 41. Piedmont Point Historic Bunker Trail Re-Route

- **Applicant:** DNR / DPOR / Kodiak District
- **Category:** Non-Motorized
- **Funds Requested / Match:** $8,000 / $723
- **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks

**Project Discussion:**

One board member had an issue with building a trail next to a cliff where a trail had already eroded away. Another member noted that the new location of the trail is next to a sturdy rocky cliff edge. A member also noted that there was no public notice or a letter from a youth-group.

### 42. South Denali Visitor Center Complex Trails Phase 1

- **Applicant:** Alaska State Parks- Design & Construction
- **Category:**
- **Funds Requested / Match:** $46,029.47 / $3,970.53
- **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks

**Project Discussion:**

One member gave the budget a zero because there was no bid; only an engineer’s estimate. Another ORTAB member commented that this was a poor application.

One ORTAB member commented that there didn’t seem to me a motorized corridor through this parking lot, but one was promised by Parks. The member also noted that the motorized corridor was a separate issue from the grant application, and had no influence on scoring the project.

### Funding Recommendation Discussion

ORTAB discussed how to categorize the projects and to spend as much of the RecTrails money as possible; they also had to satisfy the 30% Non-Motorized, 40% Diversified, and 30% Motorized requirements. To accomplish these goals, the board moved projects into different categories. There weren’t enough motorized projects, so to fill up the categories, some multiple-use non-motorized categories were moved from “non-motorized” to “diversified,” and some diversified projects with motorized-use were moved to “motorized.” *The project descriptions in this document reflect which category they were moved into. Steve Neel clarified that projects in the “diversified” category could
include non-motorized projects that provide multiple-uses. One member noted that the State can have all of its applications funded, and can get the full 50% of the money. One member brought up the possibility of not choosing to fund projects from Mat-Su State Parks this grant cycle.

**Motion:**
Mike Rearden moved that we withdraw those three applications (South Denali Visitor Center Complex Trails Phase 1, Red Shirt Lake Trail Repairs, and Trail Repairs & Equipment) from the state process and move those funds into the pool of ones that are private individuals and communities. Ron Lurk seconded.

The ORTAB was concerned that Mat-Su State Parks currently has three outstanding projects. The ORTAB was also concerned that Mat-Su Parks would not submit adequate and proper paperwork, and the board wanted them to continue and finish their current projects, and get them done. The ORTAB will then consider their projects next year if they complete their current ones. They didn’t want to burden Mat-Su State Parks with extra projects this year and cause more problems. The ORTAB also noted that the “South Denali Visitor Center Complex Trails Phase 1” project did not have a budget that Federal Highways would accept; it had only an engineer’s estimate.

**Vote:** (4 yea, 0 nay, 1 missed the vote) Motion Passed

After the last motion, the percentages were evened out so that every category was adequately represented with $50,000 left over. Steve Neel said that the obligation limitation is 94 or 95 percent, so this was as close as they were going to get to maximize the money spent.

Steve Neel explained that RecTrails was currently funded for only two-thirds of the current federal fiscal year (through May) for $936,554.00. He said that the remaining one-third of the year may be funded at a later date. The ORTAB decided that there was a good chance that Federal Highways would end up funding the whole federal fiscal year, so they chose to make their recommendations based on the projected amount for the entire fiscal year of $1,404,831.00. This recommendation would mean that about two-thirds of the approved projects could be funded initially, and in the future, the other one-third of the projects could be funded, if the funding becomes available.

**Motion:**
Mike Rearden moved to accept the final budget that we (ORTAB) are going to provide to the Director (as described by the spreadsheet that was being worked on during the meeting). Mickey Todd seconded.

**Vote:** (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed
The following is a list of RecTrails projects that have been recommended for funding by the Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board. Funding recommendation by the ORTAB does not guarantee that a project will be funded. The Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will consider the ORTAB’s recommendations and decide which projects to tentatively approve. It is then up to Federal Highways whether or not to approve individual projects.

Non-State RecTrails Projects Recommended for Funding (but not officially approved)
- Edmonds Lake / Mirror Lake Singletrack - Phase 1
- South Fork Overlook Trail Improvement
- Restoring KBay's Interpretive Trails - Phase 2
- Liewer Community Trail
- Eaglecrest Mountain Bike Flow Trail
- Skyline Ridge Park Trail Restoration
- Koponen Homestead Trail
- North Pole Beaver Springs Trail Upgrades
- HoWL Trail Days across the Bay!
- Beaver Lake Trail Improvements - Foot Trail
- A Picture Perfect Hike: An Interpretive Trail
- Sitka Storm Damage
- Hungry Point Trail Extension
- Tsalteshi Trailhead Improvement Project
- Denali State Park YCC
- Government Peak Singletrack Phase 2
- Matanuska River Park Access Trail
- CHCH Snow Cat
- Jim Creek Motorized Recreation Trails
- Mid-Valley Motorized Trail Improvement
- Eska West ATV Trail Phase 2
- Bonfire Lake to Happy River Trail Maintenance (partial funding)
- 17b Easement Trail Tread Repairs
- ATV/Salmon Stream Crossing Training/Education
- Mat Valley Moose Range Trail Bridges Upgrade
- Watermelon Trail Remediation

State RecTrails Projects Recommended for Funding (but not officially approved)
- Bird Valley Motorized Trail-Maintenance
- Northern Trail Rehabilitation
- Stiles Creek Trail
- Northern Area Training & Assessment
- Lower Chatanika ATV Trail Map and Brochure
- Battery Point Trail Hardening
Continued: State RecTrails Projects Recommended for Funding (but not officially approved)

- Kachemak Bay State Park: Saddle Trail Re-Route
- Angel Rocks Rehabilitation
- Middle Fork of Campbell Creek Trail Improvement
- Reclamation of Miller Point Lower Access Trail
- Piedmont Point Historic Bunker Trail Re-Route

LWCF Scoring Improvement

One recommendation was to rewrite the questionnaire so it aligned with the score sheet. Another idea was to reduce the amount of points that the per-capita share was worth (it is currently worth 10 points).

RecTrails Scoring Improvement

The board expressed interest in having applicants combine attachments so there were only one or two documents to look through, making applications easier to grade. They also talked about making this requirement worth points. One member thought a “budget narrative” would be helpful for ORTAB to understand projects better. Another board member thought a letter from a State Park advisory board should be all that is required for State Parks’ support letters and public notice. One member thought that since a lack of land authorization for a project disqualified it, that it should not be scored, but instead placed in the threshold questions. Another member thought that fewer scoring boxes would make the scoring more efficient, that the applicants should be required to define acronyms, and that part of the narrative could require disclosing whether equipment from past RecTrails grants would be used. One member thought the board could have a teleconference to update the score sheet after sending suggestions to Darcy Harris.

Alaska State Trails Program Funding Update

Darcy Harris explained that after the Alaska Trails Initiative ended, that less money was available for the administration of the Alaska State Trails Program. The Legislature added $200,000 to the budget for administration, and this allowed $1.5 million to come into the state annually for trail projects. She said that this money was still in the governors’ budget.

ORTAB members said that they would draft a letter to send to past grantees. This letter would encourage past grantees to send letters of support for the Alaska Recreational Trails Program to their state and federal representatives, if they found the program to be valuable. Ron Lurk and Jeff Budd will draft and send a letter to past grantees and applicants.
ORTAB Member Discussion

Darcy Harris explained that Federal Highways required having an advisory board that represented both motorized and non-motorized trail-users, but there was not a specific number of members that were required. She also told the board that Andy Morrison (ORTAB/SnowTRAC Liaison) decided not to be on the advisory board (ORTAB) anymore, although he had not yet put this in writing. The board also decided to bring in two new members, and that it would be appropriate for each member to try and find applicants. ORTAB thought that having one or two teleconferences between yearly in-person meetings would be valuable, and asked Darcy if she could host them.

Project Funding Limit Discussion

One board member suggested raising the amounts that applicants can apply for, in the hopes of fewer grants while still using as much of the funding as possible; the current number of grants being administered may become unsustainable.

Motion
Ron Lurk moved to raise the diversified (project funding limit from $50,000) to $75,000. Mike Rearden seconded.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

Motion
Jeff Budd moved to adjourn.

Vote: (5 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

- Meeting Adjourned at 4:30pm -