



North to the Future

Alaska's Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan **2016-2021**

SCOOP

North to the *Future*

Alaska's Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan **2016-2021**



Prince William Sound

SCORP



This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) meets the requirements for continued eligibility to receive matching Land and Water Conservation Funds. This plan was funded in part through a grant from the National Park Service under provision of the LWCF Act of 1965.



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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
ASLO:	Alternate State Liaison Officer designated by the Governor
ATV:	All-Terrain Vehicle
DPOR:	Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
LWCF:	Land and Water Conservation Fund administered by NPS and the State of Alaska
NPS:	National Park Service
NWI:	National Wetlands Inventory
OPSP:	Open Project Selection Process
ORRRC:	National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission
ORTAB:	Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board
RTP:	Recreational Trails Program administered by Federal Highways Administration and the State of Alaska
SCORP:	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SLO:	State Liaison Officer designated by the Governor

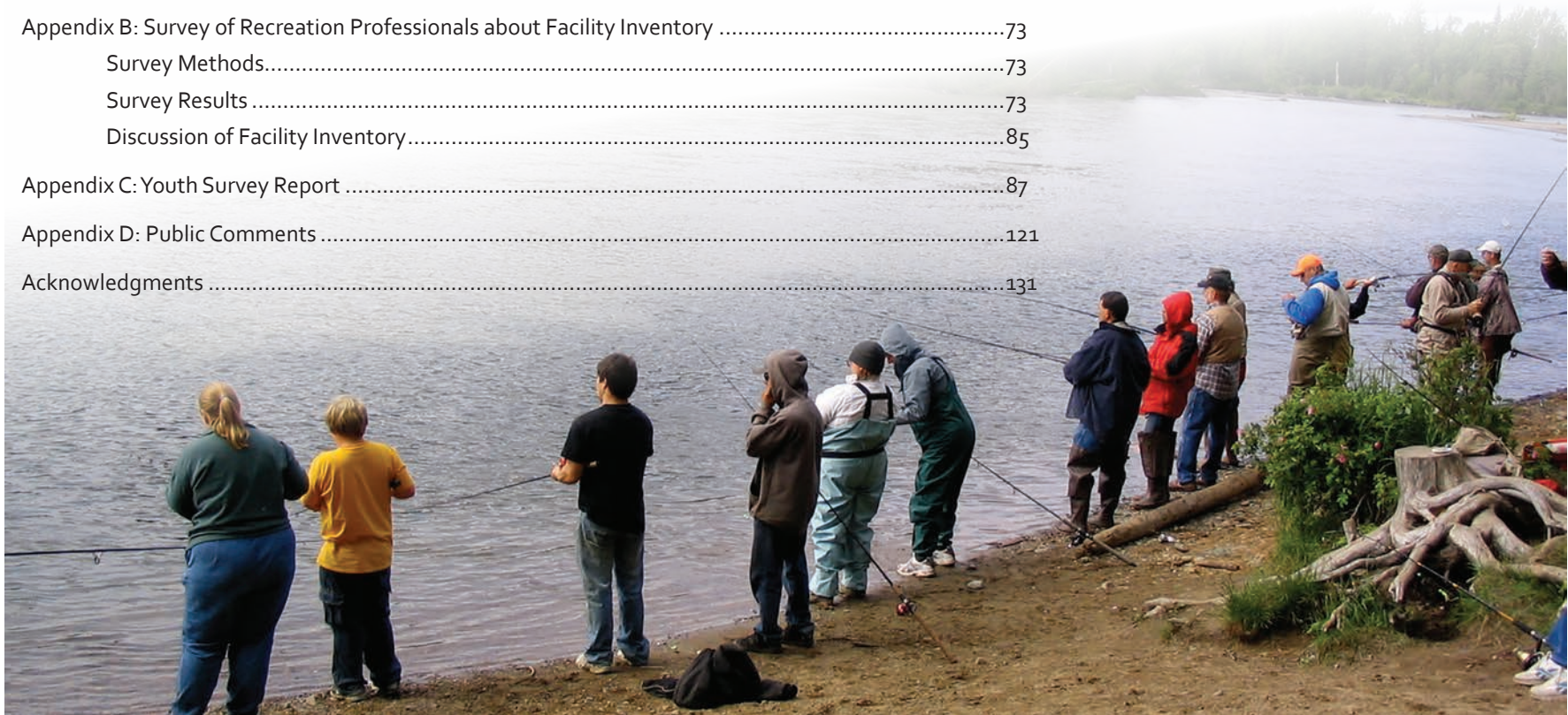
SCORP



Denali State Park

Worth to the Future

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Willow Creek State Recreation Area



1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

North to the Future is Alaska's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, commonly called the SCORP. Updated every five years, the SCORP will guide outdoor recreation providers, advisory boards, user groups, and the public in making decisions in Alaska from 2016 through 2021.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act requires states and territories to update the SCORP periodically. In each update, the state will evaluate the demand and supply of public outdoor recreation resources, document emerging trends shaping future public recreation facility needs, identify top public recreation priorities for the state (or by regions), and provide opportunities for ample public participation. For this SCORP, a youth survey was conducted to gain an understanding of their perceptions that will shape the future of outdoor recreation in Alaska. Another survey was distributed to outdoor recreation providers in Alaska, creating an inventory of outdoor recreation resources and information to improve outdoor recreation in Alaska.

The SCORP update is an eligibility requirement for the State of Alaska's participation in the federal LWCF State & Local Assistance matching grant program which provides capital project funding for close-to-home recreation per the LWCF Act of 1965 as amended. The National Park Service (NPS) administers the LWCF State and Local Assistance matching grant program in close coordination with the State of Alaska through a State Liaison Officer (SLO) and an Alternate State Liaison Officer (ASLO) designated by the Governor.

Alaska's 2016-2021 SCORP is a tool that:

- Provides government agencies, communities, and non-profits with a reference for outdoor recreation preferences, use trends, and issues relevant to Alaska through 2021
- Identifies statewide capital investment priorities for acquiring, developing, and protecting outdoor recreation resources
- Identifies the state's priorities and strategies for LWCF funding, and
- Provides information that agencies and communities need to ensure their project proposals are eligible for LWCF assistance.

In addition, the SCORP is an eligibility-related requirement for grant applications through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) managed by Federal Highways Administration and the State of Alaska. Title 23 206(d)(B) requires that all projects funded under the Recreational Trails Program “are identified in, or further a specific goal of, a recreational trails plan or statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.” [23 U.S. Code § 206 - Recreational Trails Program]

The SCORP is meant to inform and guide outdoor recreation policies and actions throughout the state for five years, but it is a broadly-written state policy document rather than a regulatory tool. The SCORP must include an “implementation plan” of proposed steps to address identified priorities. Because most close-to-home public outdoor recreation facilities are managed by state/tribal/local government and private entities beyond the SLO staff’s control, the SCORP is not required to identify specific funding sources or timelines for each implementation step.

At the conclusion of each SCORP update, NPS recommends that SLO staff revise the state’s LWCF grant application scoring criteria to reflect the updated outdoor recreation priorities. Doing so ensures that updated SCORP priorities guide the obligation of public dollars to capital projects to meet contemporary public outdoor recreation needs.

DPOR’S LWCF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Alaska’s Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), administers the LWCF grant program for the State of Alaska. Although it varies by state and territory, in Alaska the designated State Liaison Officer (SLO) is the Director of State Parks. The Alternate SLO (ASLO) and day-to-day manager of the LWCF matching grant program is the DPOR Grants Administrator. Each new governor must confirm their SLO and ASLO appointment in writing to NPS. SLO staff ensure LWCF grant program requirements are met, including:

- Updating the SCORP
- Conducting regular LWCF grant competitions for local/tribal/state government agencies
- Maintaining an Open Project Selection Process (OPSP): The grant application scoring process that determines which projects will be funded
- Administering LWCF grants from award through final billing



Tutka Bay in Kachemak Bay State Park

- Inspecting projects and ensuring compliance: warranting that all LWCF-funded projects be kept in public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity or be replaced with land of equal fair market value and recreation utility per Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act of 1965 as amended

As part of the OPSP grant application evaluation and scoring process, the SLO staff convene the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) originally established to meet requirements of the RTP program per US Code Title 23 206 (c) (2). The ORTAB uses LWCF grant scoring criteria based on the most recent SCORP's priorities to determine which projects will receive funding through the LWCF State and Local Assistance matching grant program.

THE LWCF STATE & LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM¹

Since 1965, a small percentage of federal offshore oil lease licensing fees supported a suite of programs funded through the LWCF Act to improve public lands. LWCF projects provide places for physical activity and mental solace, create jobs close to home, offset the impacts of domestic fossil fuel extraction with improvements to the public recreation estate, and contributes to a national system of public parks stretching from backyards to the backcountry. The LWCF program demonstrates the success that can be achieved when federal, state, and local government partners work together.

The LWCF State and Local Assistance program fulfills the intent of the LWCF Act by strengthening the health and vitality of the American people through matching grants that create and/or improve locally owned and managed public outdoor recreation facilities throughout the United States and its territories.

Since 1965, the LWCF State and Local Assistance program has provided almost \$3.7 billion in financial assistance to states, territories, the District of Columbia, and local units of government for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. This has amounted to over 40,000 grants to state, tribal, and local governments. Alaska has invested more than \$36 million in grants in over 300 matching LWCF projects since 1965 to create and improve state and local parks and other public outdoor recreational facilities. Since LWCF is a 50-50 matching grant program, the result is an investment of more than \$70 million in the development or acquisition of public outdoor recreation facilities for Alaska.

¹ Portions of this section are summarized from original work presented at the Society of Outdoor Recreation Planners conference in San Francisco in May 2014, by David Siegenthaler, PhD, National Park Service LWCF Program Officer in the Pacific West Region-San Francisco office.



Swinging bridge near Byers Lake in Denali State Park

In addition to providing financial assistance, the LWCF program creates an important permanent legacy through Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act. State and local agencies pledge to operate LWCF-assisted properties for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity or else replace this property with new land of equal or better fair market value and recreation utility. This guarantees that, in good times and bad, people of all backgrounds and incomes will have a place close-to-home to connect with public lands in their communities.

The following is a brief history of public outdoor recreation and how the LWCF program emerged:

- 1864:** The vision embodied by each SCORP update is a product of a rich history of collaboration going as far back as 150 years with the creation of California's Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in 1864. This action gave birth to a national and state park idea—setting aside federal lands and conveying federal lands to state and local governments for public park purposes in perpetuity.
- 1916:** The Organic Act signed by President Woodrow Wilson created the agency that later became the National Park Service. This officially began the federal parks system, as well as a parks partner for state and local governments.
- 1933:** The Emergency Conservation Work Program (Civilian Conservation Corps) involved collaboration between federal, state, and local governments to deploy work crews to park areas nationwide. The 1936 Park, Parkway, and Recreational Study Act charged the National Park Service with comprehensive studies and planning for the recreation needs of an expanding population.
- 1958:** The National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) was established. With the post-war economic boom, more leisure time, and greater mobility, a need was felt again for comprehensive studies and planning for recreation across a spectrum of types and locations.
- 1962:** The ORRRC completed a full scale national comprehensive plan known as the Commission's 1962 Report. President Kennedy urged Congress to implement the report's recommendations. The ORRRC's conservation recommendations covered the full spectrum of park types from close-to-home urban playgrounds to large, remote wilderness areas.
- 1963:** An act establishing National Recreation Areas became the "activating" legislation for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The Bureau did not survive for long, its responsibilities largely transferred to the NPS. However, the earliest planning and technical assistance authorities still exist in law and formed the basis for the NPS's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program.



Byers Lake in Denali State Park

1964: Both the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and the Wilderness Act were signed by President Johnson. Both were recommended by the ORRRC Report, and represented the importance of the full spectrum of recreational opportunities from close-to-home, urban playgrounds to more remote wilderness areas. Thinking about the spectrum of needs and how we assess them, and recreational lands and how we increase and protect them, is an ongoing conversation, as is the question of what it means to do comprehensive planning in ways that are fitting to the circumstances of today.

LOOKING AHEAD IN THE SCORP

North to the Future, our plan for furthering public outdoor recreational opportunities, consists of six chapters and three appendices, which are summarized below.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Alaska and captures recent statistics such as population, climate, land ownership, wetlands, and economic outlook amid various geographic areas of the state.

Chapter 3 examines the existing recreation areas and facilities in Alaska that are managed by federal, state, and local agencies. This includes the number of sites and acres managed by each agency, as well as the number of trails, campgrounds, boat launches, and other facilities. In addition, this chapter discusses barriers to recreation and various needs related to recreation in Alaska.

Chapter 4 explores our state's youth and their attitudes about recreation. This chapter reveals types of recreation youth currently engage in and what their needs or desires are for future recreational opportunities.

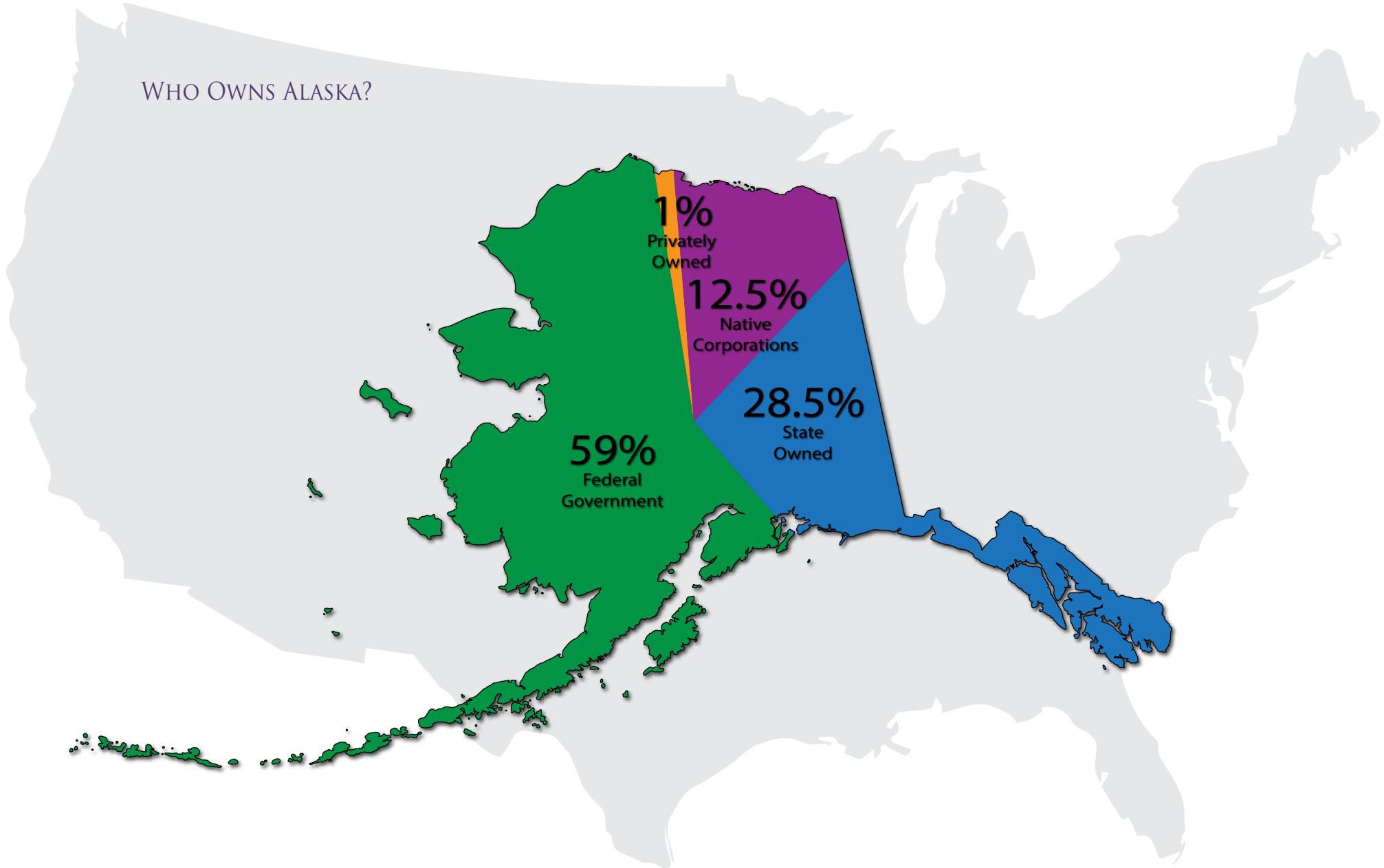
Chapter 5 describes the goals, priorities and action strategies designed to meet the recreational needs of Alaskans based on the surveys conducted during the public process for this plan.

Chapter 6 explains the open project selection process. This chapter contains a set of project-ranking selection criteria for scoring proposals, and the schedule for our bi-annual process of notifying the public of funding opportunities, deadlines, and selection criteria.



Thumb Cove State Marine Park

WHO OWNS ALASKA?



2. OVERVIEW OF THE GREAT LAND

WHO OWNS ALASKA?

Land ownership in Alaska is complex and unique. In most states, the majority of land is privately owned, but in Alaska, less than one percent is held in conventional private ownership.

Tidelands: The Alaska Statehood Act of 1959 granted the state ownership of submerged lands beneath most navigable waterways and submerged lands up to three miles offshore. According to the US Census Bureau's statistical abstract of the United States, Alaska has approximately 33,904 miles of tidal shoreline, including offshore islands, sounds, and bays, as well as the tidal portion of rivers and creeks. The state and federal governments continue to debate which rivers and lakes are navigable and where the offshore boundaries lie.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, signed into law in 1971, created significant change for Alaska's Native population. The act extinguished aboriginal land claims, provided for the formation of regional, urban, and village Native corporations, transferred approximately 44 million acres of land from federal to Native corporation ownership, and paid the corporations about \$963 million.

State and Native land selections are not completely resolved yet. Many of these remaining claims are in conflict and may require many years to resolve. Various selections cannot be completed until actual land surveys are done, also extending the timeline.



Hand-crafted uluḡtuḡ, a traditional two-person Unangan kayak.



Playground at Shageluk, Alaska

Upon completion of the conveyance process, the largest landowner in Alaska will remain the federal government, holding title to almost 59% of the state's land. The state will own about 28.5%, Native corporations about 12.5%, and the remaining amount, totaling less than 1% will be privately owned.²

WHO LIVES IN ALASKA?

Alaska may be the state with the largest area, but when it comes to population, it is among the smallest, averaging about 1.3 people per square mile. In comparison, the national average is about 89.5 people per square mile. The highest density is in the Anchorage area with about 171 people per square mile.

Alaska may be home to less than 1% of the population of the United States, but it has grown rapidly in recent years. Between 2000 and 2010, the population increased by over 13%. However, trends are now showing that the population growth is becoming more stable. For example, between July 2013 and July 2014, estimates show that there was a net loss of just 61 people, but it was the first recorded decline in Alaska's population in more than 25 years.³ According to the 2014 US Census Bureau estimates, Alaska's population is 735,601. The Anchorage and Mat-Su economic region contains over 54% of the state's population.⁴

Alaska's population is highly diverse and relatively young compared to the rest of the United States. In 2013, the median age was estimated at 34.3 years of age. Demographics in 2013 also revealed that the state population was 15% Alaska Native or American Indian, 67% white, 6% Asian, 4% African American, 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 7% multi-racial.⁵ Alaska is also home to many active duty military personnel, representing approximately 3% of the state's total population.



Volunteers remove debris (old mattress) from Dave Rose Park, Anchorage, Alaska

² Alaska Resource Development Council, "Who Owns Alaska?," Resource Review, Special Issue 2009. Found online at <http://www.akrdc.org/who-owns-alaska> [accessed July 27, 2015].

³ Alaska Dept of Labor and Workforce Development, "Population New Estimates," Alaska Economic Trends, April 2015: Vol. 35 No. 4.

⁴ Alaska Dept of Labor and Workforce Development, "2014 Population by Borough/Census Area and Economic Region," <http://labor.state.ak.us/research/pop/popest.htm> [accessed July 27, 2015].

⁵ Alaska Dept of Labor and Workforce Development, "Alaska Population Overview 2013 Estimates," published February 2015, <http://laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/pub/popover.pdf> [accessed July 27, 2015].

GEOGRAPHY & NATURAL SYSTEMS

Alaska is famous for geographic excesses, foremost of which is its size. It is the country's largest state and is one-fifth the size of the contiguous United States, encompassing approximately 570,641 square miles, of which approximately 29,000 square miles are covered by glaciers. Alaska has more miles of coastline than all of the contiguous states combined, and it is home to Denali, the tallest mountain in North America.⁶

Alaska is in a zone of geologic tension, where the Pacific and North American tectonic plates meet, giving birth to more than 130 volcanoes. Here, too, warm and cold seas meet, and the Arctic and Pacific air masses converge. The result is climate extremes and volatile, often violent, weather. Temperatures dipped to -80°F in Prospect Creek in 1971, but in Fort Yukon in 1915, the mercury reached 100°F. The Aleutian Island community of Dutch Harbor experienced a storm that produced winds measuring up to 143 miles per hour in November 2000. Though Alaska is a land of extremes, there are averages. Typically, summers are brief, warm and wet, while the days are long under the "midnight sun." Winters, on the other hand, are long, cold, and dark, though brightened by the snow and the chance of viewing the Aurora Borealis.

These dynamics are matched by a rich and diverse biota. Alaska is home to flora and fauna of temperate, subarctic, and arctic varieties in a profusion of marine, intertidal, and terrestrial environments. Plant communities range from the towering temperate rainforest of Southeast Alaska to pioneering colonies of lichen and moss crawling across rocky mountain slopes. Alaskan waters support rich fish and marine mammal populations. Migrant birds from many continents breed here, herds of caribou thunder across the arctic, and bears and eagles converge at the edges of salmon-rich streams.

CLIMATE AND ITS IMPACT ON RECREATION

In much of the United States, people can engage in user-based outdoor recreation during much of the year. Especially in rural Alaska where climate restricts user-oriented outdoor recreation facilities to four to six months of the year, most user-oriented recreation facilities are indoors.

⁶ US Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts, "Alaska," <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/02000.html>; Bruce F. Molnia, US Geological Survey, "Glaciers of North America – Glaciers of Alaska," Professional Paper 1386: Satellite Image Atlas of Glaciers of the World, Chapter 8, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/p1386k/> [accessed July 27, 2015].



View of Denali from Denali State Park

While indoor recreation facilities are not the focus of the LWCF State and Local Assistance grant program, LWCF funding may be provided for indoor projects in communities that experience extremely cold weather conditions. Such facilities fulfill an important role in Alaskan communities, allowing Alaskans to stay physically active during the extremely long and cold winters, and therefore, merit being mentioned in this chapter.

A VITAL ECOLOGICAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCE: WETLANDS IN ALASKA

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the agency responsible for National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapping. The Alaska Regional office prioritizes the wetland habitats to be mapped. It also develops status trends on analyses of wetlands and other aquatic habitats and identifies threats to those habitats. To date, only 43% of Alaska has been mapped and 36% has been digitized.

In 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *Status of Alaska Wetlands* presented a study of the wetlands and deep water habitats statewide. It is still the only comprehensive statewide document pertaining to wetlands; however, information on wetlands trends have been developed for Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks, the Palmer/Wasilla area, and Kenai River watershed.⁷

WHAT IS A WETLAND?

Wetlands can be freshwater or saltwater. They come in all sizes, and are exactly what they sound like—wet lands. Wetlands are the buffer region that transitions from aquatic to terrestrial habitats. Two-thirds of all wetlands in the United States are in Alaska.⁸ Almost 175 million acres or about one-third of our state is classified as wetlands.⁹

⁷ US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska National Wetlands Inventory, <http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/nwi/what.htm> [accessed November 3, 2015]; Hall, Jonathon et al., *Status of Alaska Wetlands*, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/documents/status-of-alaska-wetlands.pdf#search=> [accessed November 3, 2015].

⁸ Nancy Gates, ed. and Mr. Whitekeys, *The Alaska Almanac: Facts about Alaska*, 34th Edition, (Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Books, 2013), 147.

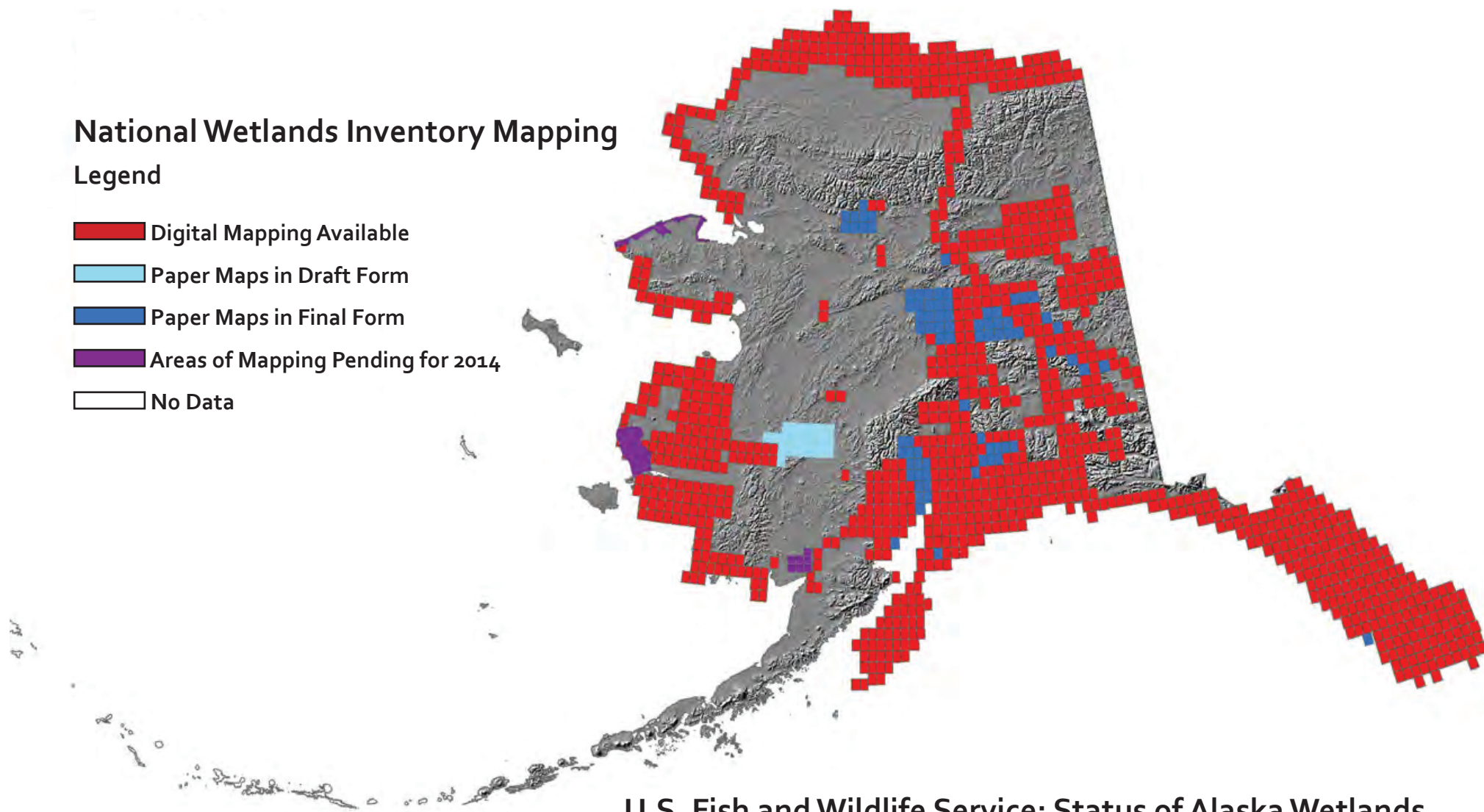
⁹ Hall, Jonathan V., et al. *Status of Alaska Wetlands*, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, 1994. <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Documents/Status-of-Alaska-Wetlands.pdf>



Bridget Pond in Point Bridget State Park

National Wetlands Inventory Mapping Legend

- Digital Mapping Available
- Paper Maps in Draft Form
- Paper Maps in Final Form
- Areas of Mapping Pending for 2014
- No Data



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Status of Alaska Wetlands

Think of all the places where Alaskans recreate and you may picture wetlands such as marshes, swamps, bogs, permafrost, or tundra. Outdoor recreation in Alaska would not be the same without our wetlands. Can you imagine fishing, hunting, bird watching, trapping, photography, or wildlife viewing without healthy wetlands? About 88% of Alaska's wetlands are encompassed in public lands.¹⁰

THREATS TO WETLANDS

Wetlands are disappearing across the United States, despite many national, state, and local programs that aim to preserve and rehabilitate them. Alaska's biggest threats to wetlands include pollution, changing climate, and habitat destruction due to filling wetlands for development, introduction of invasive species, irresponsible ATV use, and resource extraction.

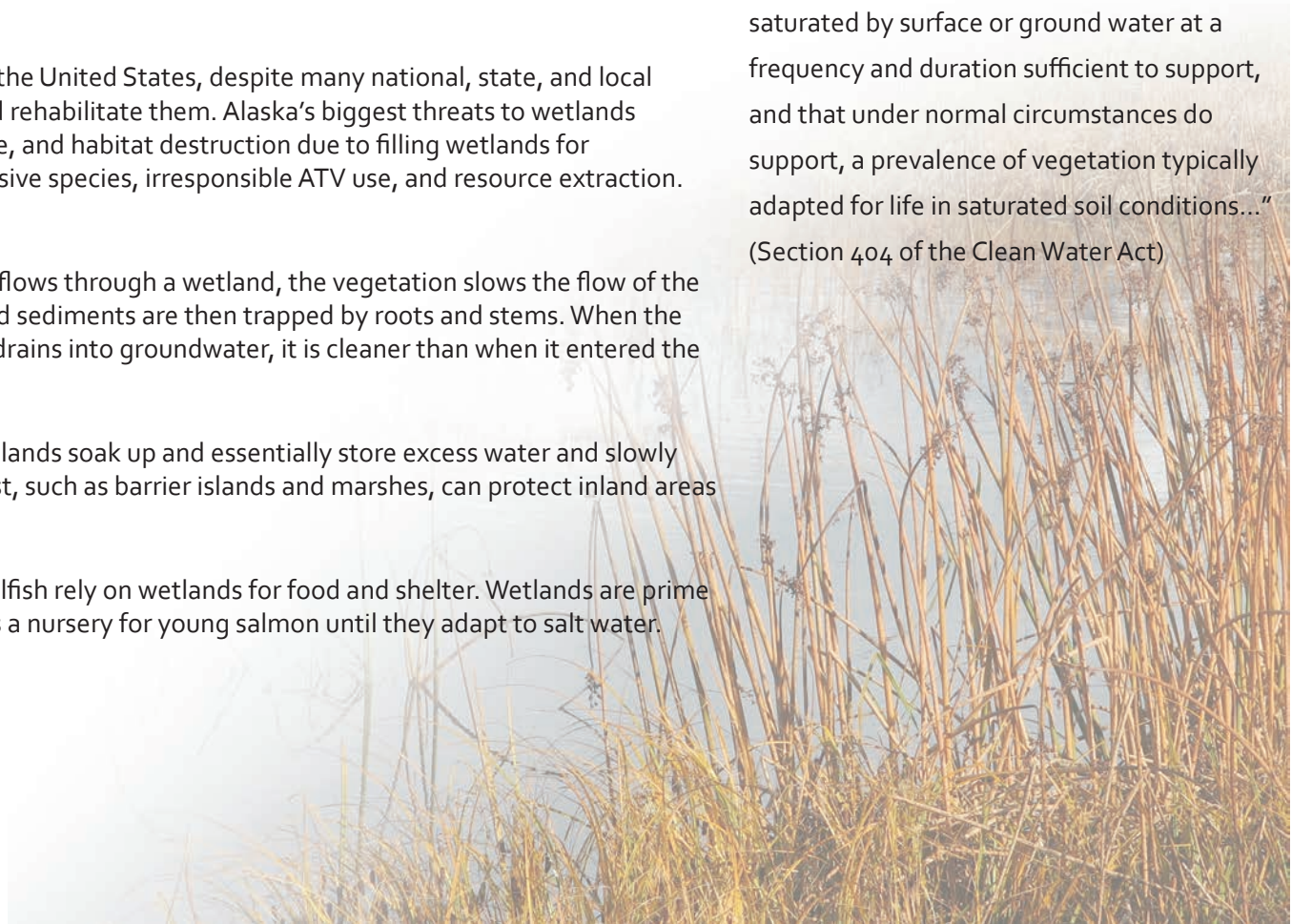
BENEFITS OF WETLANDS

Wetlands are filters. When water flows through a wetland, the vegetation slows the flow of the water; solids such as pollutants and sediments are then trapped by roots and stems. When the water flows out of the wetland or drains into groundwater, it is cleaner than when it entered the wetland.

Wetlands can control floods. Wetlands soak up and essentially store excess water and slowly release it. Wetlands along the coast, such as barrier islands and marshes, can protect inland areas from storm surges.

Wetlands are home. Fish and shellfish rely on wetlands for food and shelter. Wetlands are prime breeding habitat and they serve as a nursery for young salmon until they adapt to salt water.

DID YOU KNOW? The United States Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Environmental Protection Agency define wetlands as "...areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions..." (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act)



Potter Marsh, Anchorage, Alaska

SCORP 2016-2021

¹⁰ Ibid.

PRIORITIES FOR WETLAND ACQUISITION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan delineates the following priorities for acquisition of a wetland site:

1. Represent a rare or declining wetland type within an ecoregion
2. Be subject to identifiable threat of loss or degradation
3. Provide a high degree of public recreation benefit or value (including wildlife viewing, a popular activity with increasing value), presently or potentially in the future



Bridget Berm in Point Bridget State Park



Kenai Lake in Kenai River Special Management Area

3. ALASKA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

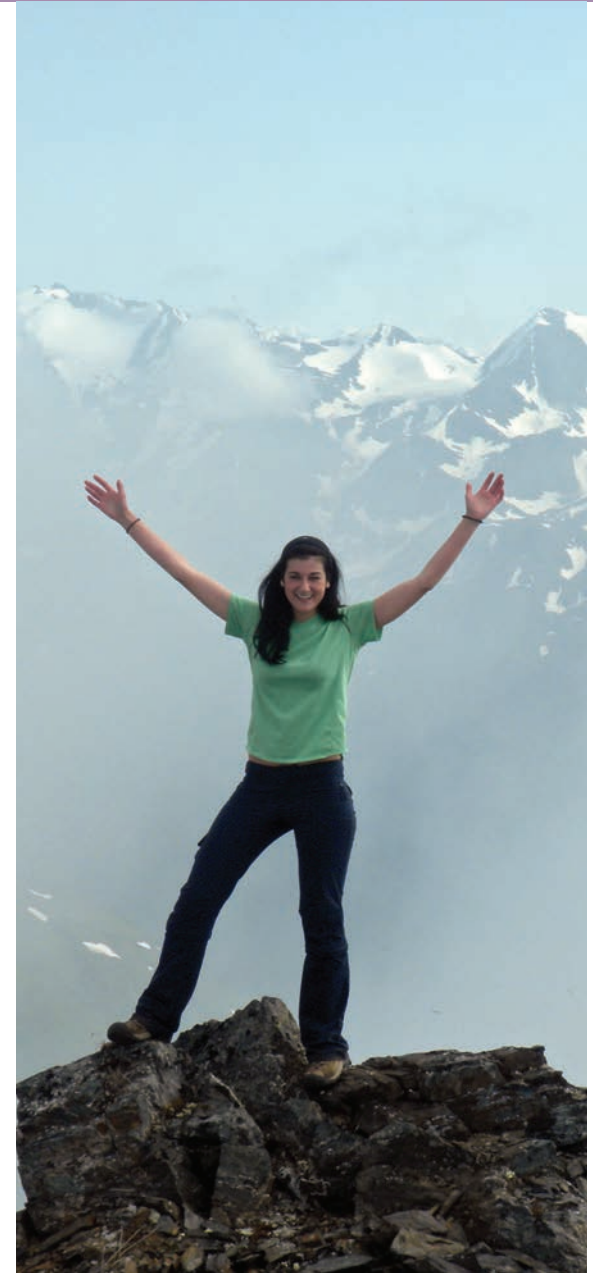
This chapter examines existing recreation areas and facilities that are managed by federal, state, and local organizations. This includes the number of sites and acres managed by each agency, as well as the number of trails, campgrounds, boat launches, and other facilities. This chapter also discusses barriers to recreation and various needs related to recreation in Alaska.

A survey was distributed by email on July 10, 2015 to almost 50 outdoor recreation professionals, representing the federal, state, and local levels, as well as the private sector. The survey remained open until August 10, 2015. It assessed management and facility needs, the greatest barriers to outdoor recreation, the most important needs and issues, and facility and resource inventories for sites managed by each respondent. Due to low participation rates, the survey was reopened from October 16 until October 30, 2015. Even so, participation rates were far from optimal; therefore, the results of this study are not comprehensive and cannot be interpreted as representative. The results serve merely as indicators of statewide public lands and recreational facilities and their needs.

About 16.6% of Alaska's total area¹¹ was represented in this survey, an area of land larger than 43 individual states.

Although only a fraction of public land managers responded to the survey, approximately 70,527,936 acres, or 110,200 square miles of public land, were represented. In other words,

¹¹ Calculations based on state areas from <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/state-area.html> accessed on Nov 19, 2015.



Chinstrap Peak in Chugach State Park

Survey for Recreation Professionals: Respondents Grouped by Geographical Areas

Railbelt

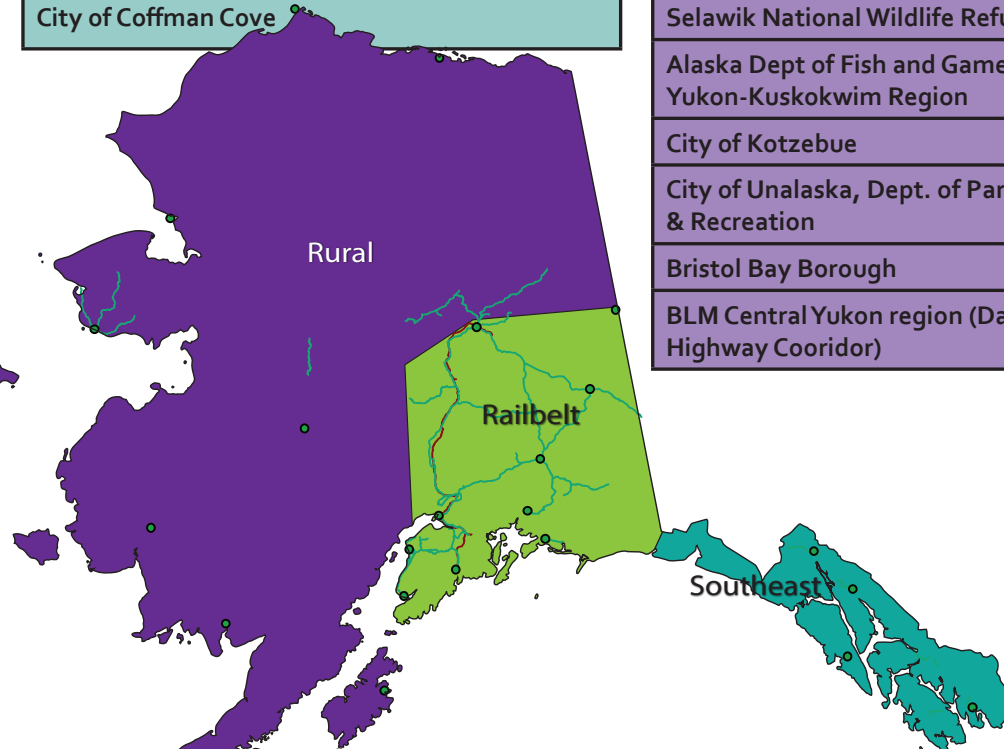
Mat-Su/Copper Basin State Parks
Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound State Parks
Chugach/Southwest Alaska State Parks
Northern Area State Parks
City of Delta Junction
Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge
Bureau of Land Management (Glennallen Field Office)
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Recreation & Library Services
Tolsona Wilderness Campground
City of Palmer, Community Development
Tok RV Village
Montana Creek Campground
Municipality of Anchorage Girdwood Parks
Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Owned Lands
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks and Trails
City of Soldotna Parks and Recreation
Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation

Southeast

City of Sitka Parks and Recreation
Alaska Division of Mining, Land, and Water Southeast Alaska Region
City of Seldovia
Tongass National Forest
Southeast Area Alaska State Parks
City of Coffman Cove

Rural

City of Nunapitchuk
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
Kodiak State Parks
Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge
Selawik National Wildlife Refuge
Alaska Dept of Fish and Game Arctic- Yukon-Kuskokwim Region
City of Kotzebue
City of Unalaska, Dept. of Parks, Culture & Recreation
Bristol Bay Borough
BLM Central Yukon region (Dalton Highway Corridor)



Survey Areas

assuming acreages were entered correctly in the survey and there is no overlap, only Alaska, Texas, California, Montana, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada are larger—and Nevada is only 372 square miles larger.

The 35 respondents who completed the Survey for Recreation Professionals were grouped according to the geographical areas they managed—**Railbelt, Southeast, or Rural**. **Railbelt** communities are those in the area connected by the railway lines and the interstate highway system. **Southeast** communities are those located on the Alaska Panhandle, west of the northern half of British Columbia. They are small to intermediate-size coastal communities accessible mainly by boat or air travel and have few road connections. **Rural** communities are remote, mostly small, and scattered. With few or no road connections, they rely heavily on air transport. This is the largest of the three areas used in the surveys for this plan.

Eighteen respondents classified as “Railbelt,” six respondents corresponded to Southeast, and eleven were considered Rural. The Railbelt respondents manage 484 parks or units, totaling 4,146,541 acres. Southeast respondents manage 443 parks or units, totaling 111,356 acres. Rural respondents manage 138 parks or units, totaling 66,270,039 acres. So, while more land managers from the Railbelt responded and reported the greatest amount of parks or units, the Rural respondents manage much more public land.

However, not every respondent managed land that fell neatly in one of these broad geographical categories. For instance, Chugach State Park, which abuts Anchorage, Alaska’s largest city, is clearly a Railbelt park, but Wood-Tikchik State Park, located near Dillingham in Southwest Alaska would fall under the Rural category, and is managed by the same respondent who manages Chugach State Park. This respondent’s headquarters are located in Chugach State Park and is, therefore, lumped into the Railbelt category. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge didn’t fit neatly into one of the three categories either, but was included in the Rural category because most of the nearby communities are, in fact rural, with Fairbanks being the exception.

WHAT’S YOUR WISH LIST THIS YEAR?

Fishing, Hunting, Hiking, Skiing, Wildlife Viewing, Snowmachining, ATVing, Mining, Mountaineering, Whitewater Rafting, Spelunking, Dog Mushing, Boating, Glacier Traversing, Berry Picking, Camping, Climbing, Biking, Photography, etc...

SURVEY METHODS

The survey asked respondents to rate recreation needs or issues and management and facility needs as: not important, slightly important, very important, extremely important and most important. Each potential answer was given a number value with 1 being “not important” and 5 being “most important.” The averages for each response were used to determine overall results for each group. The survey also asked respondents to rate barriers to recreation in their areas as: not a barrier, a minor barrier that prevents some people from using sites, a major barrier that prevents many people from using sites, or among the largest barriers that prevent people from using sites. Here, number values were also applied with 1 being “not a barrier” and 4 being “among the largest barriers that prevent people from using sites.” Average values were also used for this question.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add their own answers for each question in an “other” category.

SURVEY FOR RECREATION PROFESSIONALS PART 1: LAND MANAGEMENT NEEDS BY REGION

See Appendix A for a full explanation of the survey and its results. Summaries of results for each major area of inquiry appear below. The results have formed the SCORP’s final Goals and Strategies for the next five years.

Question 1: Please rate the importance of the following management needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).

RAILBELT

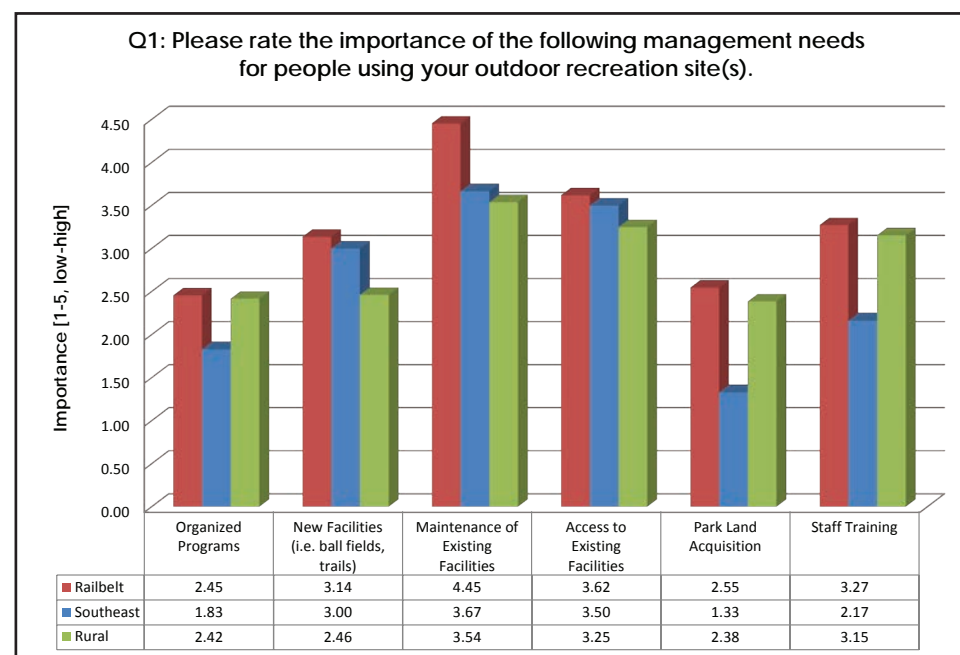
Maintenance of existing facilities was the highest rated management need followed by access to existing facilities and staff training. Organized programs was the lowest rated management need, although it was the highest rated need for Montana Creek Campground—a good reminder that average scores only tell part of the story.

SOUTHEAST

Maintenance of existing facilities was the top management need followed by access to existing facilities and new facilities. Park land acquisition was the lowest rated management need. Other management needs added by respondents included staff capacity and upgrades to existing LWCF facilities.

RURAL

Maintenance of existing facilities was rated as the greatest management need followed by access to existing facilities and staff training. The lowest rated management need was park land acquisition.



Question 2: Please rate the importance of the following facility needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).

RAILBELT

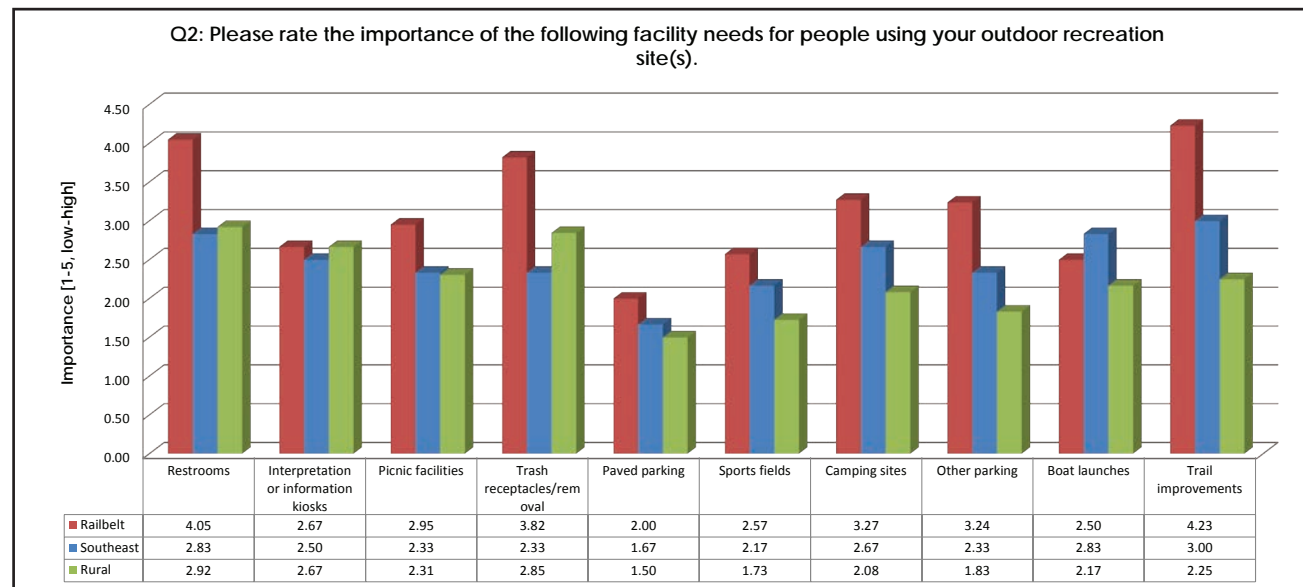
Trail improvements were rated as the highest need, although restrooms were a close second choice. These were followed by trash receptacles/removal. The lowest rated facility need was paved parking, though other parking was rated quite a bit higher, coming in fifth out of 10.

SOUTHEAST

Trail improvements were the highest rated facility need, followed by restrooms and boat launches, which were tied, and then camping sites. The lowest rated facility need was paved parking although other parking ranked much higher. This suggests that parking is needed, but paving the parking is not considered important.

RURAL

Restrooms ranked highest, followed by trash receptacles/removal and interpretation or information kiosks. Paved parking was ranked the least important facility need.



Question 3: Please identify the extent to which the following barriers prevent people from using your outdoor recreation sites.

RAILBELT

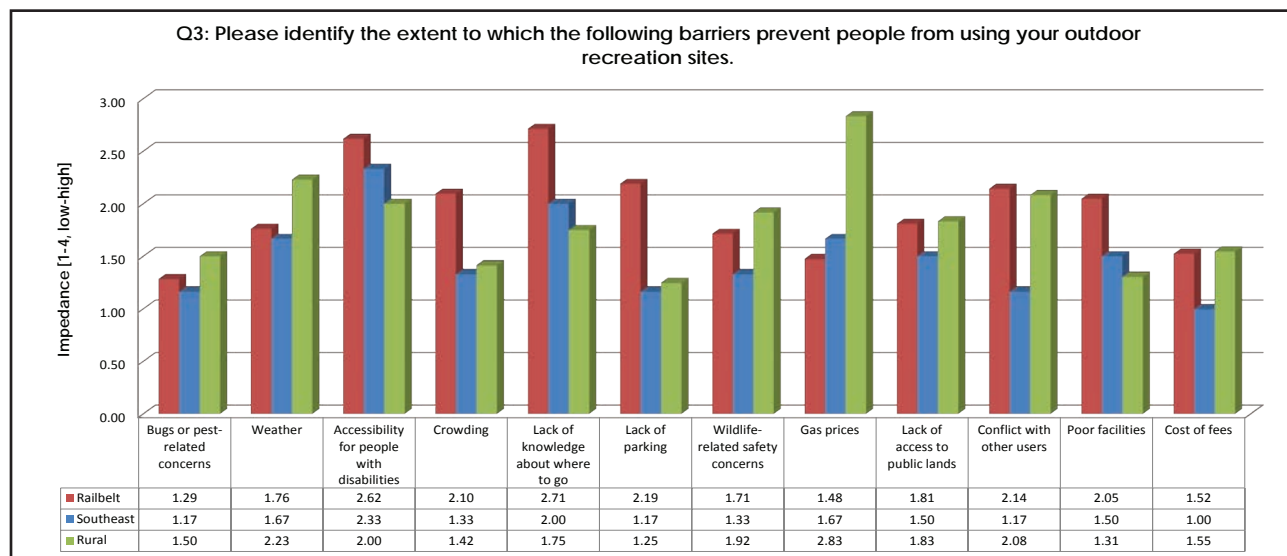
Lack of knowledge about where to go was rated as the largest barrier preventing people from using sites followed by accessibility (or lack thereof) for people with disabilities and lack of parking. The barrier least likely to prevent people from using sites was bugs or pest-related concerns.

SOUTHEAST

Accessibility, or lack thereof, for people with disabilities was ranked as the biggest barrier followed by lack of knowledge about where to go, and a tie between weather and gas prices. Based on an assessment of all survey results and write-in comments, if remoteness (and the logistics difficulties and cost arising from that remoteness) had been included formally in the survey it may have ranked as the biggest barrier.

RURAL

Gas prices were the biggest barrier followed by weather. Conflict with other users came in third, followed closely by accessibility for people with disabilities. Lack of parking was the barrier least likely to prevent people from using outdoor recreation sites. Remoteness and the logistics difficulties and cost arising from that remoteness were brought up by Rural respondents, as well as the previously mentioned Southeast respondents.



Question 4: Please rate the importance of the following outdoor recreation needs or issues in your region.

RAILBELT

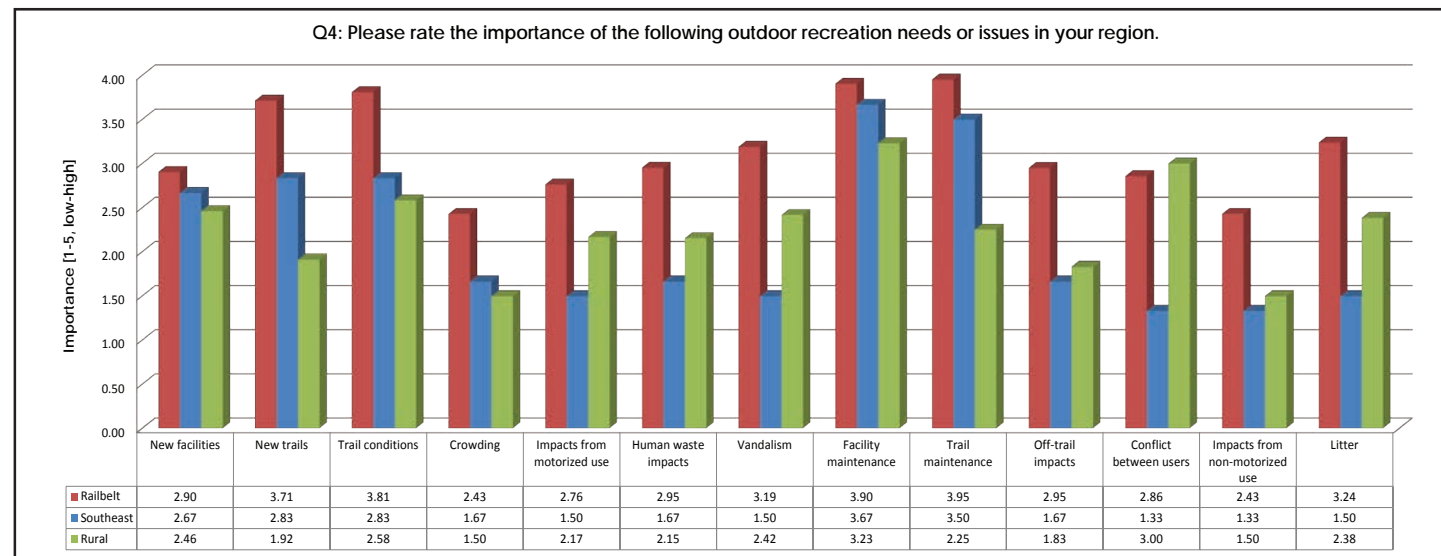
Trail maintenance was the biggest need followed by facility maintenance and trail conditions. Impacts from non-motorized use and crowding are apparently the least of the concerns for Railbelt responders.

SOUTHEAST

Facility maintenance was rated as the biggest need followed by trail maintenance. Trail conditions and new trails tied for third place. Conflict between users and impacts from non-motorized use of public lands were ranked as the lowest needs. Respondents also pointed out that access to the waterfront and beaches is a significant issue.

RURAL

Facility maintenance ranked as the biggest need followed by conflict between users and then trail conditions. The least important issue were crowding and impacts from non-motorized use.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

When the results of all respondents are looked at together, the highest scoring management needs, facility needs, and outdoor recreation needs were similar and told a consistent story. The highest scoring needs by category were:

- **Management needs:** Maintenance and access to existing facilities
- **Facility needs:** Restrooms and trail improvements
- **Barriers to using outdoor recreation sites:** Accessibility for people and lack of knowledge about where to go
- **Outdoor Recreation Needs:** Facility and trail maintenance

Managers of Alaska's public lands used for outdoor recreation deem maintenance of existing facilities, including restrooms, trails, and accessibility to these trails and facilities paramount to outdoor recreation in Alaska. This supports the idea that repairs and improvements to existing trails and facilities and better access to those trails and facilities should be high priorities for Alaska when considering what outdoor recreation projects to fund.

Projects that include additional or improved restrooms and trash receptacles/removal (the third highest rated overall facility need) would be greatly appreciated by land managers and the public alike and, when possible, should be encouraged.

Additionally, new boat launches and improved boat launches, which were rated second in importance to trail improvements in Southeast areas along with restrooms, should be given consideration in Southeast Alaska outdoor recreation project funding.



A new concrete toilet at Chena River State Recreation Area

The highest ranking barrier preventing people from using outdoor recreation sites in rural areas was gas prices. While controlling gas prices and overall state economy is outside of the scope of the SCORP, one way this barrier could be addressed is by encouraging projects that would provide outdoor recreation within walking distance of rural communities. These could include multi-use trails and elevated walkways within or around rural communities, boat launches at local lakes or rivers, fishing docks and platforms, the purchase and development of land for local parks and playgrounds, and so much more.

Conflict between users ranked second in rural areas among 13 recreation needs or issues. It is likely that conflicts between motorized use and non-motorized use can be addressed by providing separate trails and spaces for each of these user groups. One way to help address this issue is to encourage and fund the development of separate motorized and non-motorized trails, especially winter trails between rural communities.¹² This solution would also help address safety concerns that arise when trails are shared by snowmachines and dog teams, or four-wheelers and bikers.

Accessibility for people with disabilities, lack of knowledge about where to go, and conflict between users are the most important barriers to the public using outdoor recreation sites. This highlights the importance of improving trails to make them accessible to all. Projects focused on new trails and outdoor recreation facilities as well as those intended to improve existing trails and outdoor recreation could include orientation panels as one way to address the lack of knowledge about where to go, but the brunt of the work to address this issue will fall on land managers and public agencies. Even so, projects that include components that address this issue should be encouraged.

Lack of parking emerged as an important barrier in the Railbelt and projects aimed at improving, expanding, or creating parking areas should be considered important and encouraged in and near Railbelt communities. Paved parking consistently ranked lower than “other parking,” indicating that though additional parking is needed, managers generally don’t care whether it is a gravel or paved parking area.

¹² The NANA regional corporation stated that “Approximately 14% of deaths in the NANA Region are caused by unintentional injuries, which is the third highest cause of death in the area...[Improving] snow machine safety can contribute to the reduction of these deaths and ensure that shared trails are being used safely.”



Snowmachining in Hatcher Pass East Management Area



Christening an accessible canoe and kayak launch at Jewel Lake, Anchorage, Alaska

SURVEY OF RECREATION PROFESSIONALS PART 2: FACILITY INVENTORY

See Appendix B for a full explanation of the survey and its results. Summaries of results for each major area of inquiry appear below. The results inform the SCORP's Goals and Strategies for the next five years.

The survey asked respondents how many parks or units and how many acres of parks or units they managed. In addition, the survey asked respondents to enumerate the recreational facilities in their parks or units. Facility categories included campgrounds, campsites, dump stations, docks, boat ramps, picnic shelters, play areas, outdoor and indoor swimming areas, trails, etc. Respondents were also asked to break out the number of ADA facilities under their management. Acknowledging that the facilities listed in the survey were not comprehensive, respondents were provided with an "other" category and asked to specify if they managed other types of recreational facilities.

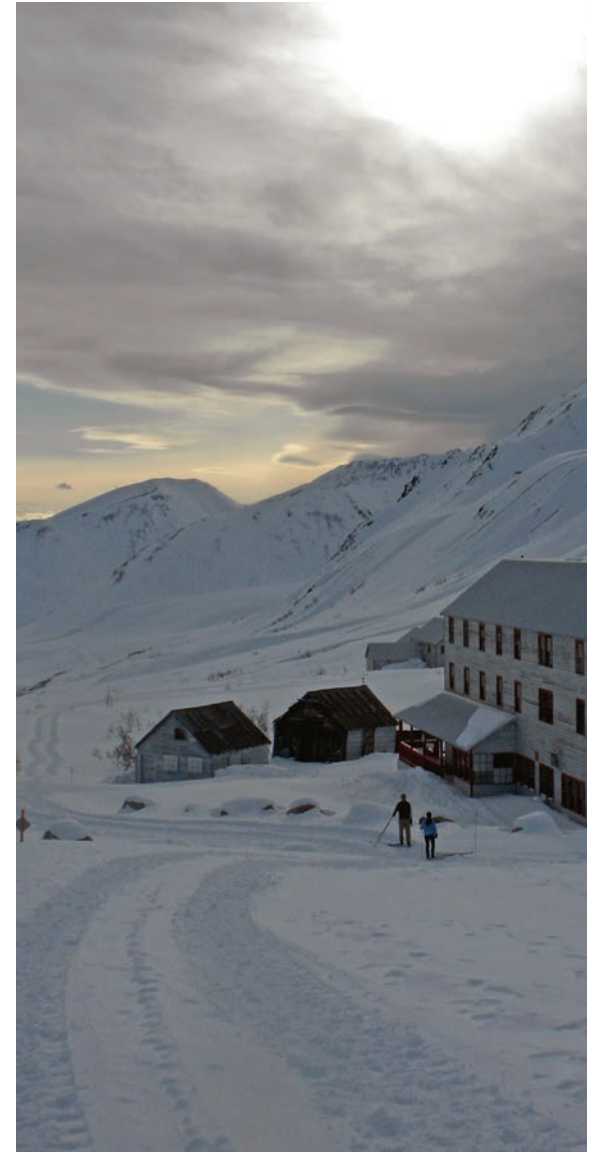
As stated previously in this chapter, participation rates were far from optimal and, therefore, the results of this study cannot be interpreted as representative. The results serve merely as indicators of statewide public lands and recreational facilities. Here, too, respondents were broken into groups based on the locations of the parks or units they managed. The inconsistencies are the same as noted previously in this chapter.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

To better evaluate the recreation facility inventory, facilities were categorized as either resource-based or user-oriented.

RESOURCE-BASED OUTDOOR RECREATION

Resource-based outdoor recreation sites cannot be provided "just anywhere." Successful resource-based outdoor recreation sites are dependent upon a combination of elements in the natural or cultural environments that cannot be easily duplicated by man. Examples of resource-based recreation include fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, camping, boating, surfing, nature study, and visiting historical sites. Resource-based recreation is typically provided by local, state, and federal agencies.



Independence Mine State Historical Park

The inventory of resource-based recreational facilities shows that, by and large, **the Railbelt manages the majority of these facilities**. This should not be surprising, considering that it is also the most densely populated survey area.

There were, however, some notable exceptions. Though the Railbelt contained more parks or outdoor recreation units, **the acreage encompassed by Rural parks and units (66,270,039 acres) grossly surpassed the total acreage of parks and units in both the Railbelt (4,146,541 acres) and Southeast (111,356 acres)**. More docks (50) were reported in Southeast than in either the Railbelt (34) or Rural (25) areas.

Southeast area respondents reported that a much higher percentage of trails are accessible, although it must be noted that they also reported far fewer trails than did the Railbelt and Rural areas. However, these results might not accurately reflect the conditions in these areas; they could be merely an artifact of this data set, skewed by an unrepresentative sample size as recreational land managers from the Rural survey area reported the smallest percentages of trails that were accessible to people with mobility concerns.

AREA	NUMBER OF PARKS/UNITS	ACRES OF PARKS/UNITS
Railbelt	484	4,146,541
Southeast	443	111,356
Rural	138	66,270,039
Total	1065	70,527,936

EXAMPLES OF RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION INCLUDE FISHING, HIKING, BIKING, HORSEBACK RIDING, HUNTING, CAMPING, BOATING, SURFING, NATURE STUDY, AND VISITING HISTORICAL SITES.

USER-ORIENTED RECREATION

User-oriented recreation facilities can be provided almost anywhere for the convenience of the user. These facilities can usually be provided if there is adequate physical space and funding. Examples include: golf and Frisbee-golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, baseball fields, swimming pools, and playgrounds. User-oriented activities are needed in vast amounts in urban and suburban areas, so it is no surprise that these facilities and programs are most often provided by local governments.

As noted previously, though Alaskans enjoy outdoor user-oriented recreation, they can only do so during four to six month out of the year. Because of this, many user-oriented recreation facilities are indoors. The survey didn't require respondents to specify if venues such as basketball courts or ice rinks were indoors or outdoors. So, some of the facilities reported in this inventory might be outdoors and some might be indoors. Here, too, the overwhelming majority of facilities reported were located in the Railbelt. For detailed results, please see Appendix B.



Playground at Kotzebue, Alaska



Indoor sports



MAKING SENSE OF THE FACILITY INVENTORY SURVEY DATA

As a whole, this facility inventory, though not statistically representative due to sample size, indicates that:

Trails are a major factor in outdoor recreation.

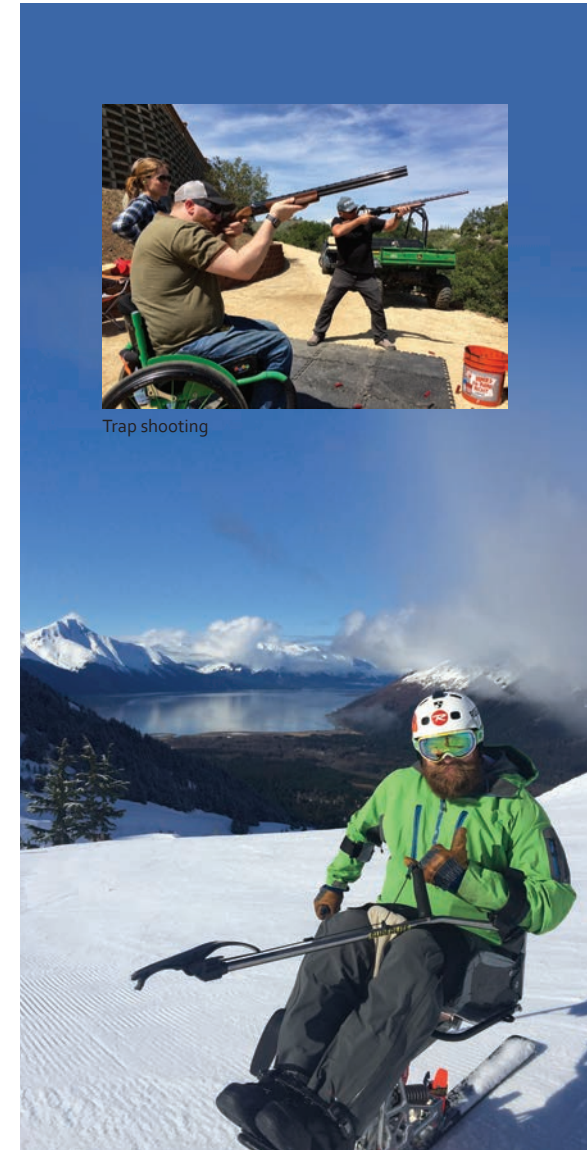
It is safe to assume that many trails exist that were not included in this survey. This means that the percentages of trails that are accessible and up to ADA standards, as shown in this inventory, are probably not accurate either. In spite of this lack of representativeness, this inventory does highlight the need for more ADA trails, including trails for motorized, non-motorized, multi-use, and winter and summer use.

ADA facilities are lacking.

ADA facilities, in general, are lacking in nearly every category and in every survey area. When considering grant applications for future projects, those with ADA components should be encouraged and strongly considered.

There is a lack of winter recreation options.

In a state where winters can last five to eight months, a lack of winter recreation options is surprising. One category where this does not hold true is trails; the number of summer and winter trails are comparable in all survey areas. The results of this survey inventory do not explain why there are more or less of certain facilities. Perhaps people prefer to recreate indoors during winter, and as previously stated, many of the user-oriented facilities might be indoor facilities. However, it is possible that more people would engage in a wider variety of outdoor winter recreation, such as hockey, ice-skating, and sledding if more outdoor winter recreation facilities were available. This is especially true in smaller communities, such as those in the Southeast and Rural survey areas.



Alpine siski at mid-mountain Alyeska Resort overlooking Turnagain Arm

Write-In Responses

The Survey for Recreation Professionals allowed respondents to include recreational facilities not listed under an “other” category.

Railbelt:

1. Bandshell (outdoor concert location)
2. Bike Park
3. Table Tennis tables (There are three tennis tables listed, possibly located outdoors, though not specified in the survey. All three are ADA.)

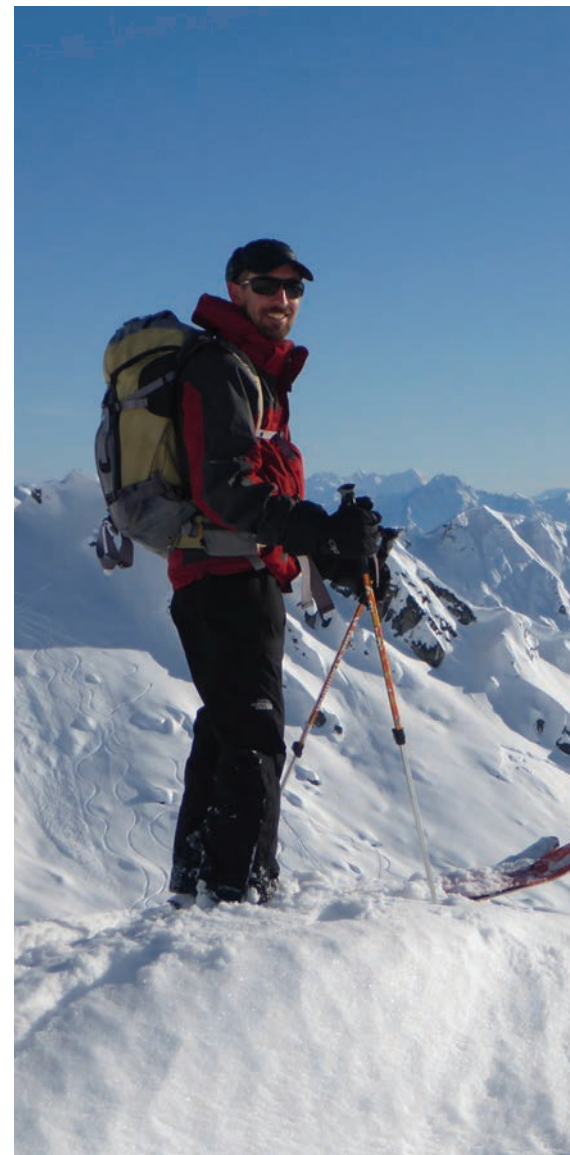
Southeast:

1. Hot Spring Tubs (remote)
2. Campsites (Campsites were included in the survey inventory and the respondent who listed campsites in the “other” category also reported 20 campsites under the “number of campsites” category. Ten of these are ADA.)

Rural:

1. Buskin River Fishing Platform (This is an ADA facility.)
2. Emergency Cabins (total of five)

More bike parks, hot spring facilities, and fishing platforms likely exist, but were not included in the survey because these and the other facilities listed in the “other” category were not specifically called out in the survey. These facilities may be considered for inclusion in subsequent surveys for the SCORP.



Telemark skiing in Hatcher Pass East Management Area



Worth to the Future

4. ALASKA'S YOUTH & OUTDOOR RECREATION

See Appendix C for a full explanation of the survey and its results. Summaries of results for each major area of inquiry appear below.

BACKGROUND & SURVEY METHODS

National initiatives are encouraging outdoor recreation among youth, such as “No Child Left Inside,” “Connecting Kids and Nature,” or “Every Kid in a Park.” Alaska’s population is relatively young, with the median age at 34.3 years old as of 2013. Our youth’s perceptions of the outdoors will shape the future of outdoor recreation in Alaska. With this in mind, DPOR conducted a statewide survey in 2014 of middle school and high school-age students to gauge recreation patterns among Alaska’s youth in three distinct community types—communities off the road system, small towns on the road system, and within larger cities.

Requests were sent to 80 school principals in all three distinct community types. The results provide insight into the recreational preferences and needs of Alaskan youth, but may not be a precise representation due to sample size limitations. As with the previous survey, the results provide broad but useful guidance that inform the SCORP’s final Goals and Strategies.



Hatcher Pass East Management Area

WHAT DO YOUTH DO IN SUMMER?

According to the survey, Alaska youth most frequently engage in hiking/walking, running, and road biking, followed by indoor exercise, fishing, and swimming in lakes or rivers. Ninety-four percent reported walking or hiking, and of these, 36% claimed to walk or hike on a daily basis while 22% did so a few times per week. The top three activities (hiking/walking, running, and road biking) are facilitated by multi-use trail systems, and have an exercise focus. Taken together with indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, etc.), the fourth most popular activity, results suggest that working out is a major recreation focus for many respondents.

ATV riding/motocross was seventh on the list, with 55% participating (and 26% participating daily or a few days per week). Motorized-use trails are likely to remain a priority for substantial numbers of Alaskan youth.

One interesting tidbit from this portion of the survey was that participants reported backcountry camping (47%) at higher rates than car camping (43%).

The top three reported **summer** activities that youth participate in are:

1. Hiking/walking (94%)
2. Running (82%)
3. Road biking (79%)



Pushing a hand cart down the tram line in Oliver Inlet State Marine Park

Most Important Summer Activities

Respondents were asked to name their two most important activities from a list of 31. Refer to Figure 2 in Appendix C to view what youth chose as the most important summer activities.

Ratings show that some activities with lower participation rates remain very important to Alaskan youth, including 1) swimming in rivers and lakes; 2) ATV / motocross; 3) fishing; 4) outdoor basketball; and 5) hunting.

Importance ratings also suggest considerable diversity among Alaskan youth with 20 out of 31 activities reported by at least 5% (numbers are rounded). Respondents were also asked to name two activities they currently did not do but would like to try. Results may indicate interest in emerging recreation activities or suggest activities that may have use increases in the future.

Summer Activities Alaskan Youth Would Like to Try

Respondents were also asked to name two activities they currently did not do but would like to try. Results may indicate interest in emerging recreation activities or suggest activities that may have use increases in the future.

The most frequently named summer activities youth would like to try:

- Sailing (16%)
- River/lake canoeing, kayaking, and rafting (15%)
- Jet skiing (14%)
- Rock climbing (13%)
- ATV / motocross (12%)
- Sea kayaking (11%)
- Hunting (10%)
- Mountain biking (9%)
- Skateboarding (8%)
- Backcountry camping (7%)

Other important summer activities specified by respondents included:

- Cross country running
- Drift-netting
- Freestyle biking
- Longboarding
- Scootering
- Skateboarding
- Trap shooting
- Traveling/trips with friends and rock concerts

WHAT DO YOUTH DO IN WINTER?

The winter-specific activities in which Alaskan youth reported participating the most were walking/hiking, indoor sports (basketball, etc.), and indoor exercise (weights, machines), followed by indoor swimming, snowmachining, and sledding. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported hiking or walking in winter, and of these, 21% claimed to walk or hike on a daily basis, while 23% did so a few times per week. Although hiking/walking was the activity with the highest rates of reported participation, more Alaskan youth reported higher daily participation in indoor sports (27%) and indoor exercise (24%). About half of the respondents reported participating in indoor swimming, snowmachining, and sledding, although relatively few did these on a daily basis. All the remaining activities saw less than 30% participation, with less than 10% participating more than a few days per month.

The top three reported winter activities that youth participate in are:

1. Walking/hiking (80%)
2. Indoor exercise (82%)
3. Indoor sports (75%)



Hatcher Pass East Management Area

Worth to the Future

MOST IMPORTANT WINTER ACTIVITIES

Respondents were asked to identify two activities from a list of 16 that they considered the most important. Figure 4 in Appendix C shows the results for all respondents.

WINTER ACTIVITIES ALASKAN YOUTH WOULD LIKE TO TRY

Respondents were also asked to name two winter activities they currently did not do, but would like to try. Results may indicate interest in emerging recreation activities or suggest those that may see use increases in the future.



Turnagain Trail in Chugach State Park

Other winter activities specified by respondents as “most important” include:

- Hunting
- Skate boarding
- Playing video games
- Fishing
- Wrestling
- Baseball (outside)
- Hang out with buddies
- Insanity teen workout
- Laying in the sun
- Motocross
- Mountain biking
- Paintball
- Riding my four wheeler
- Running on needle ice
- Running outdoors
- Snowball fights
- Softball
- Trapping

The most frequently named winter activities youth would like to try:

- Ice climbing (29%)
- Dog mushing (24%)
- Snowmachining (23%)
- Downhill skiing/snowboarding (21%)
- Outdoor hockey/skating (15%)
- Indoor hockey/skating (12%)
- Winter biking (12%)
- Indoor swimming (10%)
- Backcountry camping (8%)

DO OUR YOUTH SPEND ENOUGH TIME OUTDOORS?

A majority of Alaskan youth think they spend about the “right amount of time” outdoors, but nearly one third think they spend too little time participating in outdoor recreation. Differences between types of communities were generally small, although youth from remote communities were slightly more likely to report too little time outside compared to those in communities on the road system.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION?

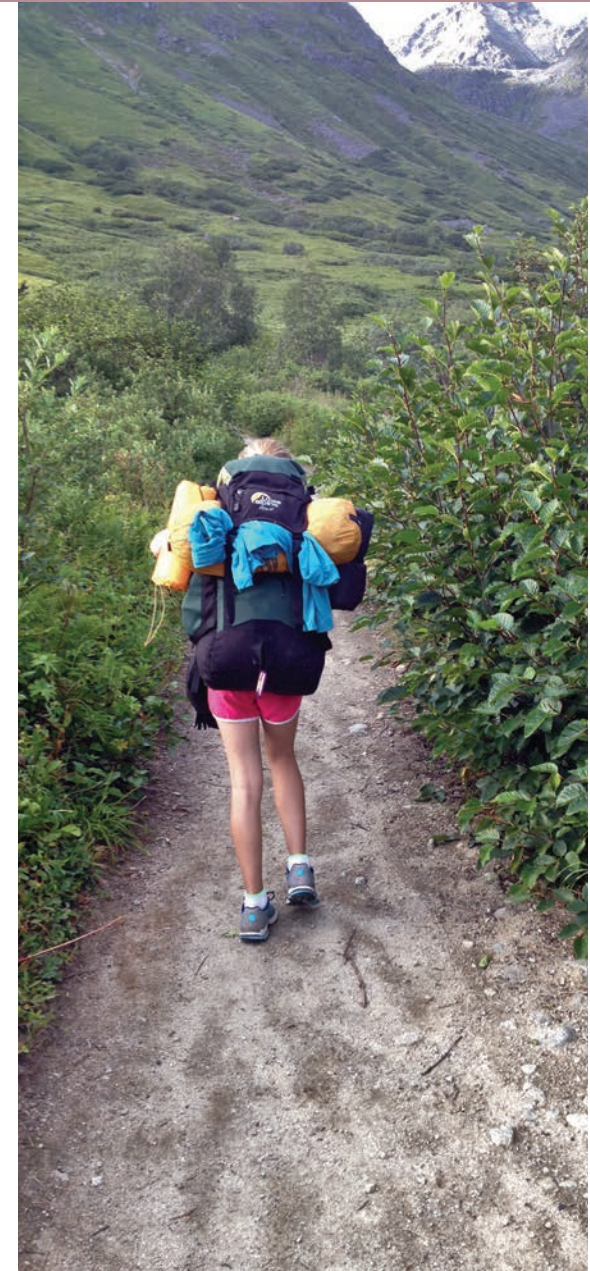
Respondents were given a list of 16 possible barriers to spending time outdoors and were asked to mark them as “not a reason—this doesn’t keep me from outdoor activities,” “a minor reason I don’t spend as much time outdoors,” or “a major reason I don’t spend as much time outdoors.”

The top four reasons for spending less time outdoors are related to bad weather or being “too busy” with other activities, homework, or screen activities. This suggests that youth perceive some trade-offs between time outdoors and other activities. Economy-related barriers were also rated relatively high, with “costs too much,” “lack of transportation,” and “lack of the right equipment” within the top seven reasons.

Barriers that land management agencies may be able to do something about were ranked as less important. Relatively few respondents reported that crowded recreation use areas are a major barrier. Similarly, recreation areas that are “too far away” (which might be mitigated by building more facilities) or the lack of organized activities (which agency programs might address) are relatively lower-ranked.

WHERE DO ALASKAN YOUTH GO FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES?

A final section of the survey asked respondents whether they had visited different types of parks in the past two years. Considerably higher local park use was reported.



Hatcher Pass East Management Area

Worth to the Future

Percent of youth who report visiting parks or other protected areas. See Table 8 in Appendix C for full results.

Response	Percent All	Percent Remote Towns	Percent Small Towns	Percent Large Cities
Local Park	67	41	73	75
State or Regional Park	28	18	34	25
National Park in Alaska	24	15	29	30
Other Protected Area in Alaska	27	19	34	18
Protected Area in the Lower-48	22	18	26	18

ABOUT TWO-THIRDS
REPORTED GOING TO A
LOCAL PARK RATHER THAN A
REGIONAL OR NATIONAL PARK.
ONLY ABOUT ONE-QUARTER
REPORTED RECREATING IN A
REGIONAL OR NATIONAL PARK.

MAKING SENSE OF THE YOUTH SURVEY DATA

The results of the youth survey indicate that what youth participate in the most during the summer (hiking/walking, running, and road biking) are associated with multi-use trail systems and have an exercise focus. During the winter, youth still participate in hiking/walking the most, but the next most commonly participated in activities are related to indoor sports and indoor exercise, probably due to Alaska's cold and dark winters.

The survey also revealed that the youth respondents feel that they spend enough time outdoors. The biggest barriers to outdoor recreation reported would be difficult for land management agencies to address because they are related to the respondents being "too busy." When they do recreate, about two-thirds of the youth who participated in the survey report going to local parks rather than regional or national parks, so close-to-home recreation opportunities are important.

Goals	Strategies
Goal 1: Increase Participation in Outdoor Recreation	<p>A. Introduce new users to our parks and green spaces</p> <p>B. Improve/increase accessibility to outdoor recreation facilities and areas</p> <p>C. Coordinate with health care providers for “Prescriptions to Parks”</p>
Goal 2: Maintain Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure	<p>A. Design, build, and refurbish infrastructure using sustainable materials</p> <p>B. Promote a safe and healthy environment for recreation</p>
Goal 3: Ensure Future Funding and Support for Outdoor Recreation	<p>A. Educate decision-makers on the economic benefits of funding outdoor recreation</p> <p>B. Support re-authorization of LWCF</p> <p>C. Partner with local groups for grassroots support</p>



Volunteers on Trails Day in Kachemak Bay State Park

5. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: GOALS & ACTION STRATEGIES

Based on an evaluation of supply and demand for outdoor recreation as shown through survey responses in the previous chapters, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation has developed the following goals and strategies.

GOAL 1: INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Strategy A: Introduce new users to our parks and green spaces

Alaska has a diverse, transitory, and multi-cultural population. In an effort to introduce people who might not otherwise know about or use our tremendous parks and green spaces, DPOR has initiated several theme-related programs. The “Arts in the Parks” program featured activities such as a day at Independence Mine in Hatcher Pass where local artists and outdoor enthusiasts gathered for hands-on instruction at their easels for *plein air* painting.

In 2015, an “Artist-in-Residence” program was also implemented by DPOR. This program provides artists a two-week stay at a scenic cabin in the Ernest Gruening State Historical Park, 27 miles north of Juneau. From June through September, artists may experience the spectacular views and wildlife (whales, birds, tide pool inhabitants) along the rocky shores of Southeast Alaska. Artwork created during the residency provide the public with a unique view of the area through the eyes, ears, and hands of the artist.

“Poems in Place” is another initiative sponsored by DPOR in partnership with the Alaska Center for the Book, the Alaska Poetry League, the State Council on the Arts, and others. In 2015, Fort



Artists and volunteers at a Byers Lake Arts-in-the-Parks event in Denali State Park.



Ernest Gruening Cabin is the temporary home for the Artist-in-Residence program

Abercrombie State Historical Park in Kodiak and Caines Head Recreation Area near Seward were honored with the installation of poems by local writers. Following a statewide contest, a poem is selected that best allows a visitor to pause and think about that special place, perhaps in a new way. The winning poem is installed on permanent signage and recognized in a public dedication at that place.

DPOR also participates in "First Day Hikes," a 50-state national initiative sponsored by the National Association of State Park Directors that takes place on New Year's Day. People are encouraged to gather at a state park on New Year's Day to start the brand new year off right and get outside to enjoy time skiing (in the Northern region) or hiking (in Southeast Alaska). Families and small groups enjoyed the social aspect of sharing time together, as well as being physically active outside amid wilderness landscapes.

In conjunction with the Division of Agriculture, DPOR also hosted a "Dutch Oven Cook-Off" featuring Alaska-grown vegetables. Held at the Chena River State Recreation Area's Red Squirrel Campground in August 2015, the event drew families interested in cooking in cast iron and culminated with a potluck dinner. This experience provided the public another interesting and unique way to enjoy the outdoors.

DPOR anticipates continuing these themed programs or implementing others as ways to introduce new users to the great outdoors. (The youth survey revealed that students are interested in trying activities such as sailing and rock climbing.) These themed programs continue to provide the public with unique opportunities for recreational, historical, and educational experiences in wonderful outdoor settings. With these family-friendly and open-interest programs, we anticipate increasing public outreach to new users, youth, and underrepresented populations among diverse cultures. Perhaps programs could be developed around those activities.

Strategy B: Improve and increase accessibility to outdoor recreation facilities and areas

Although Alaska boasts huge tracts of land and water suitable for recreating, the public often has limited access to actually use these areas. For example, Chugach State Park which abuts Anchorage, the state's largest city, covers roughly half a million acres; however, access is



Tom Sexton poses with his poem at the Poems in Place dedication at Independence Mine State Historical Park



Bobby Andrew and child pose with his poem at the Poems in Place dedication at Lake Aleknagik State Recreation Site



First Day hikers in Delta Junction, Alaska

somewhat limited due to the rugged terrain, local housing development, and basic highway or railroad infrastructure. The survey results show that the public would like larger parking areas or trailheads in order to better access and use the recreation areas. The public would also benefit from adding new access points in other areas.

While DPOR has increased parking areas at places such as Glen Alps in Chugach State Park, financial or geophysical constraints don't always allow a parking area to be enlarged. Consequently, people park their vehicles along the road or in the neighborhood, forgo their outing, or go elsewhere. Each of these options has inherent drawbacks. Thus, as funding becomes available, DPOR will look to increasing accessibility to its recreation estate where it is able. In lieu of greater access in some places, DPOR has installed cameras which broadcast live over the division's website. Potential users looking to recreate may view the parking lot to see how full it is prior to making a decision to drive to a particular access point.

Providing improved access to the many lakes and rivers people enjoy is another area for DPOR to work toward. Existing boat launches (for motorized and non-motorized watercraft), docks and platforms for fishing and swimming are well-used by the public. The recreation professional's survey shows that increasing the number of access points and improving existing access to fishing, boating, and swimming areas would be most welcome.

DPOR would also like to address "lack of knowledge about where to go," since it was listed as a top barrier by surveyed respondents. Improving information about recreational opportunities, access points to recreation sites, and wayfinding in general (both online and on the ground) would further increase public usage of these outdoor sites.

Strategy C: Coordinate with health care providers for "Prescriptions to Parks"

With the rise of diseases related to lack of physical activity among denizens of the United States, (obesity, diabetes, depression, et al.), DPOR may partner with local health care providers to implement a "Prescription to the Parks" program. This initiative, successful in other states, may increase participation in the outdoors by new user groups. Through this initiative, DPOR could not only increase participation in outdoor activities, and reach new users, but also promote the mental and physical health and well-being of the general populace.



Hiker at Donnelly Dome, near Delta Junction, Alaska, on Trails Day

GOAL 2: MAINTAIN SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

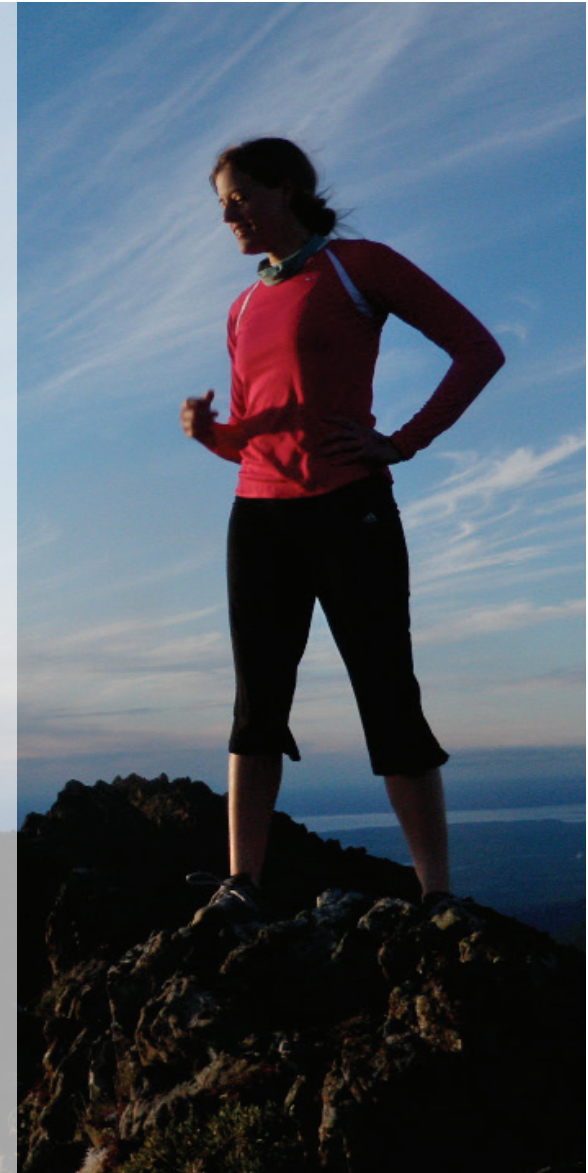
Strategy A: Design, build, and refurbish infrastructure using sustainable materials

Nationwide, the recreational facilities we use every day are in need of refurbishing. Alaska is no different. With declining revenues dedicated to public outdoor recreation and constant public demand on the facilities, many could use improvement. One way DPOR intends to address this is by using sustainable materials. Building and installing concrete privies and picnic pavilions, rather than wooden structures, has resulted in infrastructure which is easier to clean and more impervious to miscreant's behaviors.

Whenever possible, too, DPOR seeks to incorporate energy efficient, recyclable, and adaptable materials and methods in design and construction. For example, using sky lights or side lights in outbuildings, solar panels and motion-detecting lights will help reduce costs while maintaining a safely lit area for users.

Strategy B: Promote a safe and healthy environment for recreation

DPOR is fully committed to retaining the state's environmental infrastructure for continued resource-based recreation. Through signage, education and protective barriers, the division promotes healthy river bank habitat, restores and protects eroded areas and promotes official trail usage. In addition, DPOR sponsors or partners with other agencies to promote area-wide events such as "Creek Clean-up Weekend" and "Trails Improvement Day." For example, one group of volunteers spent a summer day near the village of Eklutna along Thunderbird Falls, picking up litter and checking the pathway along the trail to the water falls. These and similar efforts help provide a healthy, safe, sustainable, and welcoming environment for the recreating public.



Peak Two southeast of Flattop Mountain in Chugach State Park

GOAL 3: ENSURE FUTURE FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Strategy A: Educate decision-makers on the economic benefits of funding outdoor recreation

While many people are aware of the overall physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation, few understand the financial benefits. More recently, though, studies are being conducted which indicate that each dollar invested in public outdoor recreation results in many more dollars circulating within the local economy. For example, a 2015 study conducted in Washington state revealed that each dollar spent on outdoor recreation actually generated \$1.36 within that state's economy.

Although the State of Alaska has not yet performed a similar study, we could presume similar results. In 2006, the Outdoor Industry Foundation released information regarding both nationwide and state-by-state effects of outdoor recreation on economies. According to this study, Alaska's active outdoor recreation activities fueled our economy in the following manner:

- Contributed nearly \$2.5 billion annually to Alaska's economy
- Supported 28,000 jobs statewide
- Generated \$66 million in annual state tax revenue, and
- Produced \$1.7 billion annually in retail sales and services (more than 5% of the gross state product)!


Armed with beneficial and quantitative information such as this, DPOR may better educate decision-makers when seeking additional investment in statewide recreation areas.

Strategy B: Support re-authorization of LWCF

The State of Alaska issued a letter of support, signed by the Governor, seeking reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund with recommendations to more adequately fund the stateside program. The stateside program only receives a small percentage (roughly 15%) of the available funding each year, while the federal side receives the lion's share. In addition, the State of Alaska receives a bare minimum of the nationwide appropriation, based on population



The wonders of a sea star in Tutka Bay at Kachemak Bay State Park



and other factors. However, the amount has been so small that, for the past decade, DPOR has chosen to combine two-year's worth of appropriations before opening a round for local communities to apply for grants. The governor's letter and further communications have been directed to Alaska's Congressional delegation. DPOR continues to work with the delegation to educate them on the benefits of fully funding this program for all Alaskan residents and visitors.

Strategy C: Partner with local groups for grassroots support

We are fortunate in Alaska to have many interested and involved groups working in partnership to support outdoor recreation. However, there is always room to grow. Currently, we have four "Friends of..." groups actively supporting State parks within Kachemak Bay, Kodiak Island, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, and at the Eagle River Nature Center. These groups help in many ways, as they can apply for grants, host fund-raising activities and offer volunteer or educational workshops.

These local agencies are instrumental in reaching areas of the public we might not otherwise reach, as members span a varied range of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. DPOR seeks to foster further coordination with various local groups, as well as encourage the formulation of additional partnerships in other parts of the state.

6. OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) is a critical link, connecting our comprehensive plan, *North to the Future*, to LWCF funding priorities and grant processes. The OPSP is used to determine how funding is applied among grant applicants. The OPSP provides objective scoring criteria of awards based on statewide priorities for development of outdoor recreation resources and land acquisition.

Eligible applicants for LWCF awards are entities that have the legal authority to provide parks and recreational facilities for the public. In Alaska, that legal authority is held by the state government, as well as by most boroughs or cities, and some tribal governmental units. An eligible entity applying for a priority project identified later in this chapter will be ranked against other local applicants to determine whether they would receive a 50/50 matching grant through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Alaska's OPSP includes the following:

- public notification of funding opportunities
- technical and individual assistance for applicants via phone, email, or in person
- published selection criteria that identify outdoor recreation needs and priorities
- published evaluation and scoring criteria
- fair and equitable evaluation of grant project applications



Cairn in Denali State Park

During the past decade while federal funding levels for LWCF have been historically low, the State of Alaska has chosen to combine two-year's-worth of appropriations prior to opening a grant round for competition. This bi-annual schedule for the OPSP may be subject to variables such as ORTAB meeting dates and staffing levels, but it generally follows a timeline similar to this:

- July:** Publicly announce anticipated funding and solicit preliminary applications (Competition is open for at least 90 days.)
- July-October:** Provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, as needed
- November:** Preliminary applications due to State Liaison Officer (SLO) or Alternate State Liaison Officer/Grants Administrator a minimum of 90 days after public solicitation announcement
- December:** DPOR staff perform initial review of preliminary applications for completeness, verify eligibility of applicant, and prepare applications for dissemination to ORTAB members prior to the public meeting.
- January:** DPOR holds a public meeting with ORTAB members, presenting preliminary applications for discussion and ranking for potential funding. SLO/Division Director approves final project ranking. DPOR staff notify applicants of ranking decisions and recommended funding levels.
- February-May:** DPOR staff work with applicants who were recommended for funding to complete full application packages.
- June:** DPOR staff submit full application packages to the National Park Service for final review, approval, and LWCF grant award. Upon NPS approval, DPOR staff will input grant applications into Grants.gov.

Sunset at Gold Mint, Hatcher Pass East Management Area

HOW ARE PROPOSALS RANKED?

LWCF project proposals are scored using several factors. The most heavily-weighted criterion is whether the project addresses a high priority listed in the SCORP. Other factors include the following:

- whether the project is compatible with or identified in a local plan
- the degree of public participation and support of the proposed project
- applicant's ability to operate and maintain the project after completion
- proximity and accessibility to the public
- number of age groups served
- number of special populations served
- innovative or creative aspects in design, construction
- positive environmental impacts (i.e., turning a landfill area into a park)
- site suitability
- per capita share of LWCF money previously received by the applicant
- criteria for acquisition projects only

You may find the latest information, including the rating form for LWCF applications at:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/lwcf.htm>

THE MOST HEAVILY-WEIGHTED CRITERION IS WHETHER THE PROJECT ADDRESSES A HIGH PRIORITY LISTED IN THE SCORP.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY PROJECT TYPES?

Surveys of Alaska's youth and recreation professionals at the federal, state, and local levels revealed the types of projects deemed as priorities for LWCF funding assistance.

High Priority Project Type #1: Trail and facility upgrades or improvements (includes support facilities, restrooms, campsites.)

Maintenance of existing facilities was ranked as the most important management need by the respondents of the Survey for Recreation Professionals. Specifically, trail maintenance, trail conditions, and facility maintenance were rated among the highest management needs statewide. These issues were repeatedly selected in more than one question in the Survey for Recreation Professionals. Maintenance of boat launches, campsites, restrooms, trash receptacles/removal, and trail improvements were among the highest-ranking facility needs in this survey.

It is important to note that LWCF grant funding can be applied to projects that address trail and facility upgrades or improvements, but funding cannot be applied to daily maintenance tasks such as cleaning restrooms and removing trash.

Priority	Project Types
High Priority Projects	<p>Type #1: Trail and facility upgrades or improvements (includes support facilities, restrooms, campsites)</p> <p>Type #2: Improved access to recreation areas (parking, boat launches, trailheads, signs, etc.)</p> <p>Type #3: Meet ADA accessibility standards</p>
Moderate Priority Project	<p>Type #1: Acquisition or development of new trails and facilities</p>



Snowmachining near Lake Aleknagik State Recreation Site

Worth to the Future

Recreation professionals who responded to the survey also stated that there is a lack of knowledge about where to go and cited a need for better orientation. This issue could be resolved if it were incorporated into improvements being made to existing trails and facilities.

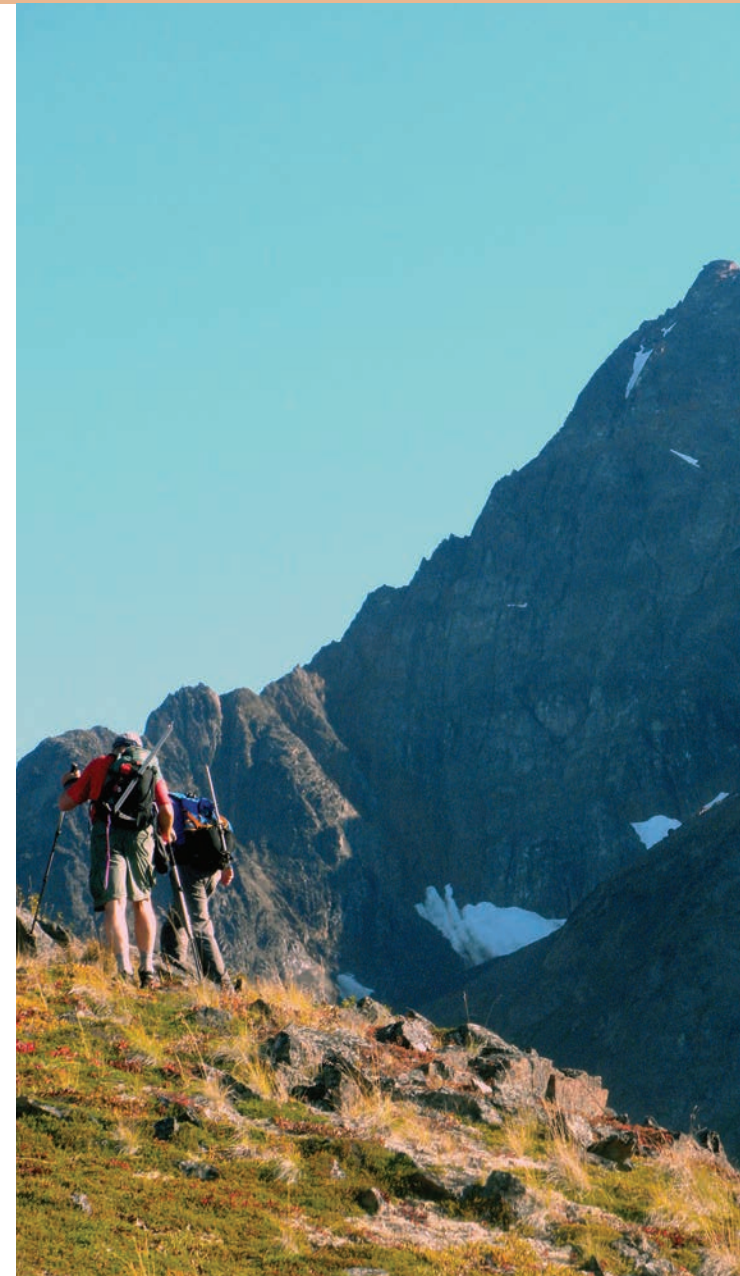
The youth survey also revealed the importance of improving or upgrading trail systems and the facilities associated with them. During the summer, 94% of the youth who responded to the survey walk/hike, run, or bike on multi-use trails and 55% of the respondents said they used motorized trails. During the winter, 88% of the youth respondents walk/hike.

High Priority Project Type #2: Improved access to recreation areas (parking, boat launches, trailheads, signs, etc.)

The results of the Survey for Recreation Professionals support the need for improved access points to recreation areas, such as adequate parking and new or improved boat launches and trailheads. This issue was rated the second highest management need for all three areas.

A lack of knowledge about where to go is the Railbelt's biggest barrier, preventing people from using outdoor recreation sites. It is also Southeast's second biggest barrier. As stated earlier, this issue could be resolved by including better orientation and information into projects that address improved access.

The youth survey asked what activities the respondents were interested in, but have never tried. Among the top of the list for summer activities were water sports such as sailing, paddling, and jet skiing, as well as rock climbing, ATV/motocross, hunting, mountain biking, and skateboarding. The top winter activities that youth wanted to try, but never have tried, include ice climbing, mushing, snowmachining, alpine skiing/snowboarding, hockey/ice skating, winter biking, indoor swimming, and backcountry camping. These activities may be emerging trends in recreation. Providing new or improved access to these activities could be beneficial to the future of outdoor recreation in Alaska.



Hiking to Bird Peak in Chugach State Park

High Priority Project Type #3: Meet ADA accessibility standards

Projects that are designed to meet ADA accessibility requirements are projects that benefit everyone. New and existing sites can be designed or re-designed to include elements that allow access for all. The Survey for Recreation Professionals revealed that Southeast's biggest barrier preventing people from recreating is a lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. It was also listed as the second largest barrier for the Railbelt and the fourth largest barrier for the Rural areas.



Snowboarding and sitskiing at the upper mountain area of Mt. Alyeska

Moderate Priority Project Type #1: Acquisition or development of new trails and facilities

The Survey for Recreation Professionals asked respondents to rate the importance of 13 recreation needs or issues in their areas. Though trail and facility maintenance was rated as most important overall, new trails and new facilities were rated as the fourth and fifth most important needs.

Out of a list of twelve possible barriers that prevent people from participating in outdoor recreation, the Rural area rated conflicts with other users as their third largest barrier, Railbelt rated it as their fourth largest barrier, and Southeast as the sixth, tied with bugs or pest-related concerns. One possible resolution to this barrier is to provide separated trails for motorized and non-motorized activities.

Projects designed to be accessible to the greatest number of people should be strongly considered.

Other Issues for Discussion

There were several issues and needs that arose in the results of the surveys for both youth and recreation professionals that are beyond the scope of the SCORP, but they still deserve discussion.

Youth were asked to rate the barriers that prevent them from participating in outdoor recreation. The top reasons are not issues that can be resolved with LWCF grant funding, but managers could keep them in mind when developing or rehabilitating trails and facilities. The youth respondents cited being too busy with “other activities,” homework, and screen activities, and they identified economic barriers such as cost of the activity, lack of transportation, and lack of proper equipment.

The Survey for Recreation Professionals asked about management needs and barriers to recreation participation that also may not be resolved with LWCF funding. For example, the Railbelt and Rural area managers ranked staff training as their third biggest management need and LWCF cannot fund staff training. Also, gas prices were listed as the largest barrier preventing people from participating in outdoor recreation in the Rural areas, and this issue cannot be resolved with LWCF funding. However, close-to-home recreational opportunities such as creating trails around town, playgrounds, sledding hills, or fishing platforms can encourage people to recreate outdoors without needing to fill up the gas tank.

The highest ranking facility needs for each survey area are as follows:

Railbelt

1. Trail improvements
2. Restrooms
3. Trash receptacles/removal

Southeast

1. Trail improvements
2. Restrooms and boat launches (tied for second)
3. Campsites

Rural

1. Restrooms
2. Trash receptacles/removal
3. Interpretation and information kiosks



Playground in Kotzebue, Alaska

Land and Water Conservation Fund	
Evaluation Criteria: Rating Form for Grant Applications	
Applicant: _____	Date: _____
Project: _____	Rater: _____
	Points
Evaluate based on information solely provided in the application. If the applicant does not address the topic, allot zero points. If addressed marginally, allot between zero and the maximum for that category. There are 100 possible points.	
1 Proximity and accessibility to the public. <i>Is project adjacent to or connected by trail to other public facilities or areas? Is it within walking distance of expected users? Or conveniently reached by public transportation or other means appropriate for the site? Or is access to the site limited or inconvenient for the service population? Allot up to 5 points.</i>	
2. How many of the six age groups shown below will be served? <i>Youngsters age 1-5; Children 6-11; Youth ages 12-18; Young Adults 19-30; Adults 31-60; Elders 61+ Allot 1 point if 1 or 2 age groups will be served. Allot 3 points if 3 or 4 age groups will be served. Allot 5 points if more than 4 groups.</i>	
3 How many special population groups will be served? (i.e., low income, minority, or disabled) <i>Allot 1 point if 1 special population group will be served. Allot 2 points if 2 groups will be served. Allot 5 points if 3 or more groups will be served.</i>	
4 Innovative Features, Creative Design, and Beneficial Partnerships. <i>Will the project incorporate energy efficient components or other innovative features to reduce operation and maintenance costs? Does the design offer a creative solution to any problem? Has a funding partner contributed at least 25% of the applicant's share in support of the project? Allot up to 10 points.</i>	

5 Positive Environmental Impacts.		
<i>If the project will reclaim a landfill or transform other brown sites into green spaces for public outdoor recreation, allot up to 10 points.</i>		
6. Is the project type (campground, trail, playground) identified as a priority in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)?		
<i>If project type is identified as a High Priority, allot 20 points. If Medium Priority, 15 points. If Low Priority, 10 points. If not identified in SCORP, allot zero.</i>		
7 Measure the demonstrated local need and support for the project.		
<p>a. Local Plan: <i>If project is identified as a major community need or high priority in a local plan, allot up to 10 points. If unclear identification, allot between 0-10 points.</i></p> <p>b. Public Participation: <i>If applicant solicited wide public input and received favorable public support for the project, allot 10 points. If public input opportunities were minimal or public support was mixed, allot between 0-10.</i></p> <p>c. Operation and Maintenance Capability: <i>If applicant describes reasonable budget, staff, or plan for O & M on this project, allot up to 5 points.</i></p>		
8 Site Suitability. <i>DPOR will calculate and provide results.</i>		
<p><i>Will site provide recreational opportunities commensurate with the funding requested?</i></p> <p><i>If 40% or less of budget will be used for site preparation, allot 5 points.</i></p> <p><i>If more than 40% of budget will be used for site preparation, allot 2 points.</i></p> <p><i>If more than 40% will be used for site preparation, and feasible alternate sites exist, allot 0 points.</i></p>		

<p>9 Per Capita Share. <i>DPOR will calculate and provide results. Calculation is based on the total previous amounts of LWCF investment a community has received in relation to population.</i></p>		
<p><i>If applicant has previously received...</i> <i>More than 30% above per capita share, allot 0 points.</i> <i>Between 30% above and 30% below per capita share, allot 5.</i> <i>More than 30% below per capita share, allot 10 points.</i></p>		
<p>10 Acquisition Projects Only</p>		
<p><i>If severe consequences would result from failure to act (i.e., natural resource is removed from public access or there is imminent threat of irretrievable loss of resource with no feasible alternative), allot up to 5 points.</i></p>		



Big Bay ranger station Shuyak Island State Park



Byers Lake in Denali State Park

APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF RECREATION PROFESSIONALS ABOUT OVERALL NEEDS & PRIORITIES

This appendix examines the results of the Survey of Recreation Professionals, analyzing the needs and priorities associated with existing recreation areas and facilities in Alaska that are managed by federal, state, and local land management organizations. The survey also requested that recreation professionals complete a facility inventory for areas under their management. This inventory can be found in Appendix B.

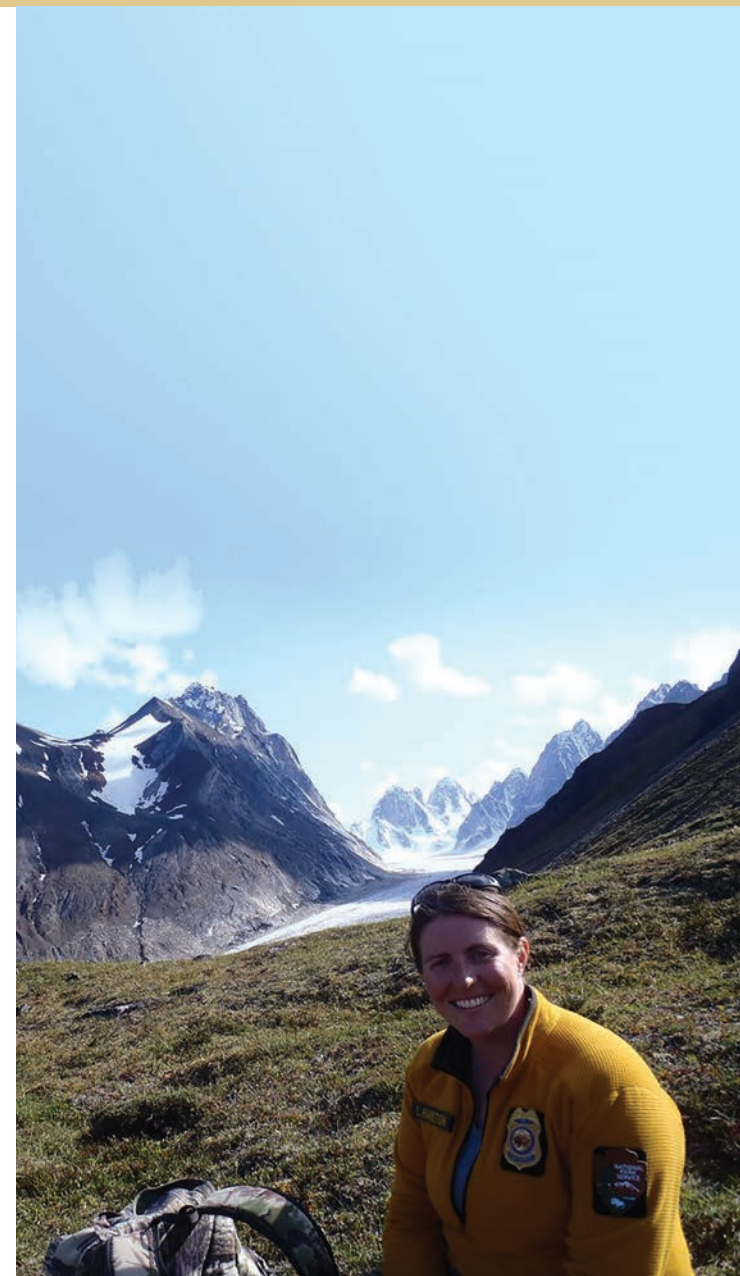
INTRODUCTION

A survey was distributed by email on July 10, 2015 and remained open until August 10, 2015. The survey assessed management and facility needs, the greatest barriers to outdoor recreation in each area, the most important needs and issues in each area, and facility and resource inventories for sites managed by each respondent. Due to low participation rates it was reopened from October 16 until October 30, 2015. Even so, the participation rates were far from optimal; therefore, the results of this study are not comprehensive and cannot be interpreted as representative. The results serve merely as indicators of statewide public lands and recreational facilities and their needs.

Although only a fraction of public land managers responded to the survey, approximately 70,527,936 acres, or 110,200 square miles of public land, were represented. In other words, assuming acreages were entered correctly in the survey and there is no overlap, only Alaska, Texas, California, Montana, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada are larger—and Nevada is only 372 square miles larger.

The 35 respondents to the Survey for Recreation Professionals were grouped according to the geographical areas they managed—Railbelt, Southeast, or Rural.

Eighteen respondents classified as “Railbelt,” six respondents corresponded to Southeast, and eleven were considered Rural. The Railbelt respondents manage 484 parks or units, totaling



NPS ranger at the Southwest Preserve of Denali National Park

4,146,541 acres. Southeast respondents manage 443 parks or units, totaling 111,356 acres. Rural respondents manage 138 parks or units, totaling 66,270,039 acres. So, while more land managers from the Railbelt responded and reported the greatest amount of parks or units, the Rural respondents manage much more public land.

However, not every respondent managed land that fell neatly in one of these broad geographical categories. For instance, Chugach State Park, which abuts Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, is clearly a Railbelt park, but Wood-Tikchik State Park, located near Dillingham in Southwest Alaska would fall under the Rural category, and is managed by the same respondent who manages Chugach State Park. This respondent's headquarters are located in Chugach State Park and is, therefore, lumped into the Railbelt category. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge didn't fit neatly into one of the three categories either, but was included in the Rural category because most of the nearby communities are, in fact rural, with Fairbanks being the exception.



Lake Aleknagik near Agulowak River outlet

SURVEY METHODS

The survey asked respondents to rate recreation needs or issues and management and facility needs as: not important, slightly important, very important, extremely important and most important. Each potential answer was given a number value with 1 being “not important” and 5 being “most important.” The averages for each response were used to determine overall results for each group.

The survey also asked respondents to rate barriers to recreation in their areas as: not a barrier, a minor barrier that prevents some people from using sites, a major barrier that prevents many people from using sites, or among the largest barriers that prevent people from using sites. Here, number values were also applied with 1 being “not a barrier” and 4 being “among the largest barriers that prevent people from using sites.” Average values were also used for this question.

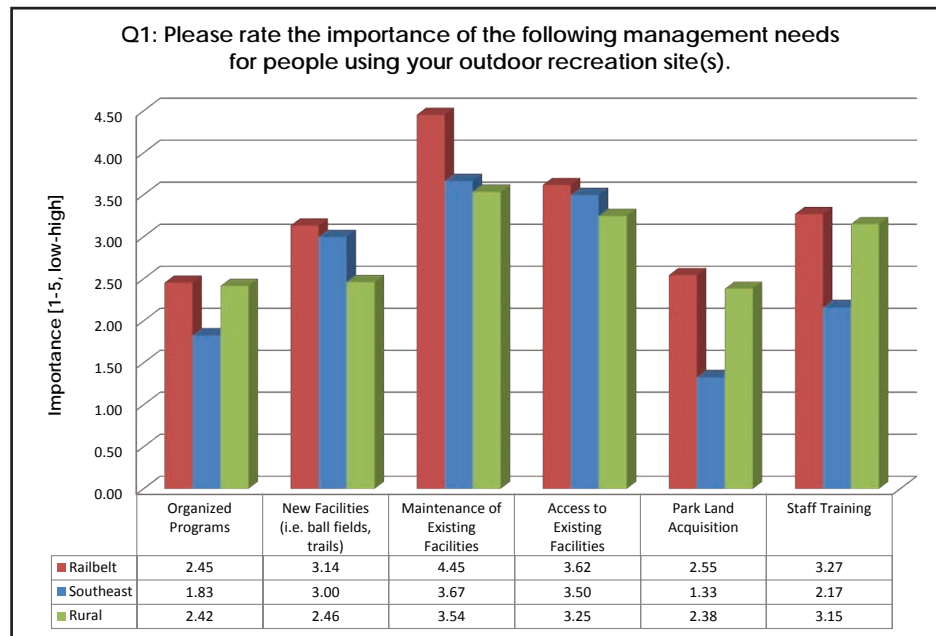
Respondents were also given the opportunity to add their own answers for each question in an “other” category.



Tonsina Point in Caines Head State Recreation Area

SURVEY RESULTS BY REGION

Question 1: Please rate the importance of the following management needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).



Railbelt

Maintenance of existing facilities was the highest rated management need with an average score of 4.45 out of 5 for Railbelt public lands. Access to existing facilities was the second highest rated management need with an average score of 3.62, followed by staff training with an average score of 3.27. Organized programs were the lowest rated management need. However, it was the highest rated need for Montana Creek Campground, a good reminder that average scores only tell part of the story. Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge also rated “knowledge of access trails to refuge resources” as extremely important under “other.”

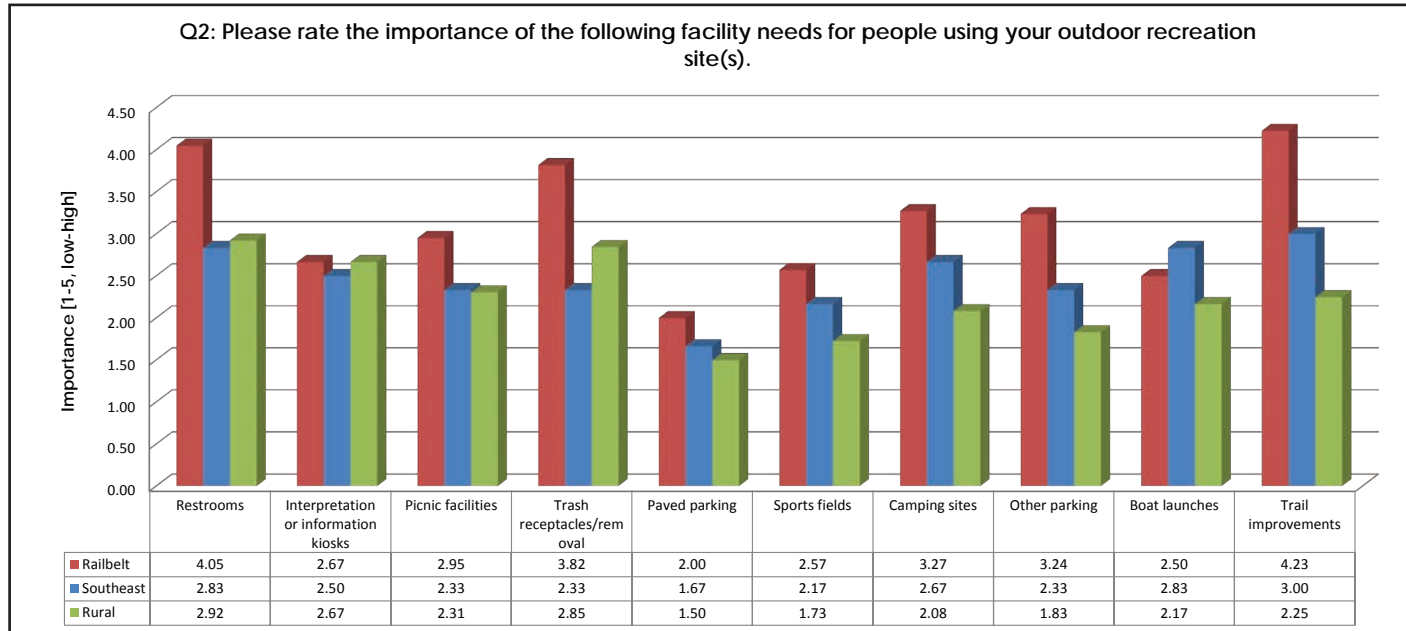
Southeast

In Southeast, maintenance of existing facilities was rated as the top management need with an average score of 3.67, followed by access to existing facilities (3.50) and new facilities (3.00). Park land acquisition was the lowest rated management need with an average score of 1.33. Other management needs added by respondents included staff capacity and upgrades to existing LWCF facilities.

Rural

Maintenance of existing facilities was rated as the biggest management need in the rural area with an average score of 3.54. The second highest rated management need was access to existing facilities (3.25), followed by staff training (3.15). The lowest rated management need was park land acquisition (2.38), though it was rated highly by more than one respondent.

Question 2: Please rate the importance of the following facility needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).



Railbelt

The highest rated facility need among Railbelt land managers was trail improvements with an average score of 4.23 out of 5. Restrooms came in as a close second with an average score of 4.05, followed by trash receptacles/removal (3.82). The lowest rated facility need was paved parking (2.00), though other parking was rated quite a bit higher (3.24) coming in fifth out of 10. Making trails wheelchair accessible was a facility need noted and highly rated by one of the respondents in the “other” option. This is likely a need for other Railbelt respondents, too, but it was not called out in the survey.

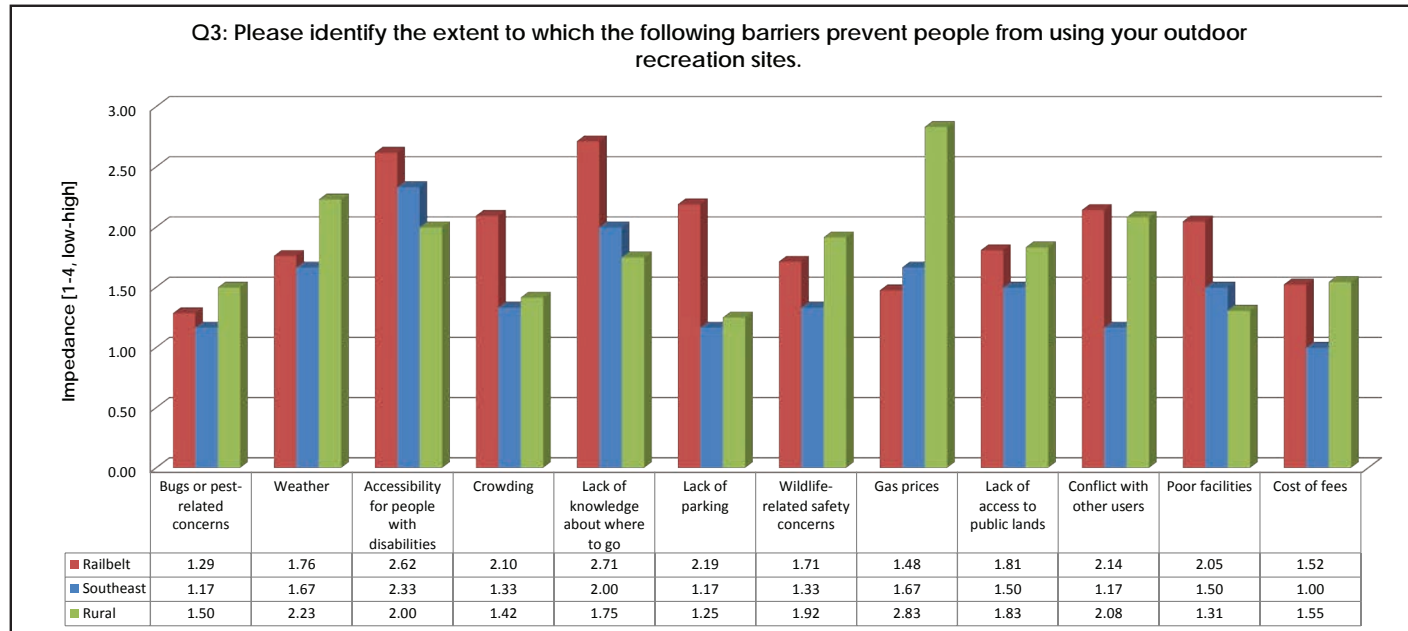
Southeast

Trail improvements were also the highest rated facility needs in Southeast with an average score of 3.00. The second highest rated facility needs were restrooms and boat launches, which were tied with an average score of 2.83. Camping sites came in as the third highest ranked facility need with an average score of 2.67. The lowest rated facility need was paved parking (1.67). Like facility needs in the Railbelt, though paved parking was not considered too important, other parking ranked much higher, suggesting that parking is needed but paving the parking is not considered important. Needs not included in the survey, but noted by respondents include playgrounds and public-use cabins. Playgrounds were ranked as most important by Sitka Parks and Recreation.

Rural

Restrooms ranked highest among Rural respondents for facility needs with an average score of 2.92. The second and third highest ranking needs were trash receptacles/removal (2.85) and interpretation or information kiosks (2.67). Paved parking also ranked as the least important facility need (1.50).

Question 3: Please identify the extent to which the following barriers prevent people from using your outdoor recreation sites.



Railbelt

Lack of knowledge about where to go was rated as the largest barrier preventing people from using sites in the Railbelt with an average score of 2.71 out of 4. The second and third biggest barriers were accessibility for people with disabilities (or lack thereof) and lack of parking, with average scores of 2.62 and 2.19 respectively. The barrier least likely to prevent people from using sites was bugs or pest-related concerns (1.29).

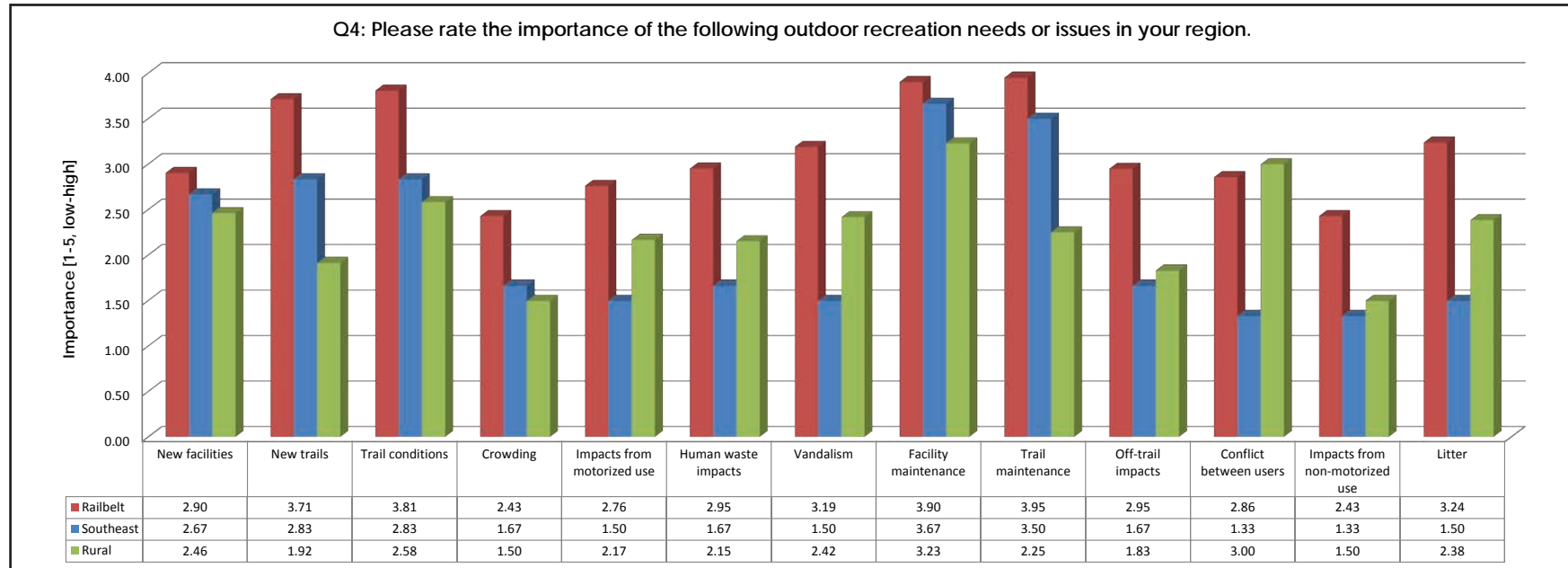
Southeast

Accessibility for people with disabilities (or lack thereof) was ranked as the biggest barrier preventing people from using sites, with an average score of 2.33. Lack of knowledge about where to go came in second highest (2.00). Weather and gas prices tied as the third biggest barriers preventing people from using sites with average scores of 1.67. Remoteness (and the logistics difficulties and cost arising from that remoteness) was not listed among the barriers preventing people from using outdoor recreation sites, but was noted by one of the respondents as being among the largest barriers that prevent people from using sites. Had this barrier been included in the survey, it is possible that it would have been ranked as the biggest barrier by other respondents.

Rural

In Rural areas, gas prices were listed as the biggest barrier preventing people from using recreational sites, with an average score of 2.83 out of 4. Weather came in second with an average score of 2.23. Conflict with other users came in third (2.08), followed closely by accessibility for people with disabilities (2.00). The barrier least likely to prevent people from using outdoor recreation sites was lack of parking. Remoteness and the logistics difficulties and cost arising from that remoteness were brought up by Rural respondents as well as the previously mentioned Southeast respondents.

Question 4: Please rate the importance of the following outdoor recreation needs or issues in your region.



Railbelt

Trail maintenance appears to be the biggest need or issue for outdoor recreation sites in the Railbelt with an average score of 3.95 out of 5. Facility maintenance is a close second (3.90), followed by trail conditions (3.81). Impacts from non-motorized use and crowding are apparently the least of the concerns for Railbelt responders with average scores of 2.43.

Southeast

Facility maintenance was rated as the biggest need or issue in Southeast public lands with an average score of 3.67. Trail maintenance is the second biggest issue or need (3.50). Trail conditions and new trails tied for third place among the biggest needs or issues for Southeast respondents with an average score of 2.83. Conflict between users and impacts from non-motorized use of public lands were ranked as the lowest needs for Southeast with average scores of 1.33. Respondents pointed out that access to the waterfront and beaches is a significant issue in Southeast that was not included in the survey.

Rural

Facility maintenance ranked as the biggest need or issue for Rural respondents with an average score of 3.23. Conflict between users was the second biggest issue facing Rural outdoor recreation sites with an average score of 3.00. The third biggest need or issue was trail conditions with an average score of 2.58. The least important issues to Rural respondents were crowding and impacts from non-motorized use (1.50).

STATEWIDE COMBINED SURVEY RESULTS

When the results of all respondents are looked at together, the highest scoring management needs, facility needs, and outdoor recreation needs were similar and told a consistent story. Maintenance and access to existing facilities were the highest scoring management needs. Restrooms and trail improvements were considered the most important facility needs. Facility and trail maintenance emerged as the most important outdoor recreation needs overall.

When viewed together, these survey results clearly indicate that managers of Alaska's public lands used for outdoor recreation deem maintenance of existing facilities, including restrooms, and trails and accessibility to these trails and facilities paramount to outdoor recreation in Alaska. This supports the idea that repairs and improvements to existing trails and facilities and better access to those trails and facilities should be high priorities for Alaska when considering what outdoor recreation projects to fund.

Projects that include additional or improved restrooms and trash receptacles/removal (the third highest rated overall facility need) would be greatly appreciated by land managers and the public alike and, when possible, should be encouraged. Additionally, new boat launches and improved boat launches, which were rated second in importance to trail improvements in Southeast areas along with restrooms, should be given consideration in Southeast Alaska outdoor recreation project funding.

A recreation issue that did not emerge as important looking at all the data as a whole, but that was quite significant in rural areas when data was examined by area was conflict between users. It is likely that conflicts between motorized use and non-motorized use can be addressed by providing separate trails and spaces for each of these user groups. One way to help address this issue is to encourage and fund the development of separate motorized and non-motorized trails, especially winter trails between rural communities.¹ This solution would also help address safety concerns that arise when trails are shared by snowmachines and dog teams, or four-wheelers and bikers.

¹ The NANA regional corporation stated that "Approximately 14% of deaths in the NANA Region are caused by unintentional injuries, which is the third highest cause of death in the area...[Improving] snow machine safety can contribute to the reduction of these deaths and ensure that shared trails are being used safely."

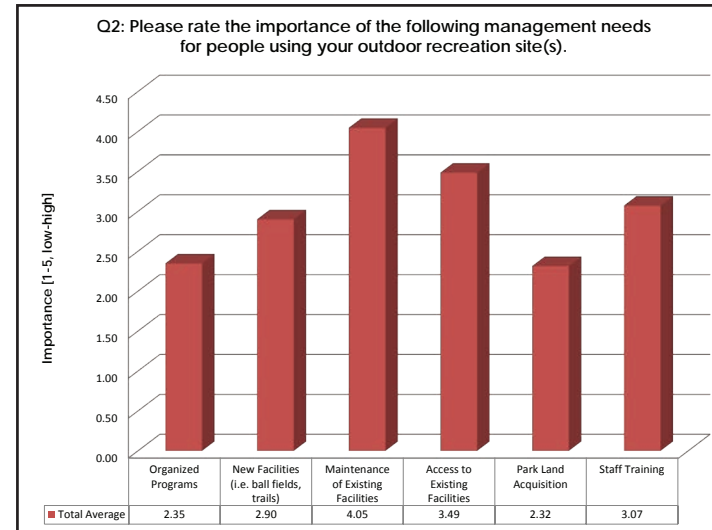
The results of overall data collected regarding barriers that prevent people from using outdoor recreation sites suggest that accessibility for people with disabilities, lack of knowledge about where to go, and conflict between users are the most important barriers. This highlights the importance of improving trails to make them accessible to all. Projects focused on new trails and outdoor recreation facilities as well as those intended to improve existing trails and outdoor recreation could include orientation panels as one way to address the lack of knowledge about where to go, but the brunt of the work to address this issue will fall on land managers and public agencies. Even so, projects that include components that address this issue should be encouraged.

When the results for this question are separated by area, it is worth mentioning the outliers that weren't found significant when all data was viewed together. The highest ranking barrier preventing people from using outdoor recreation sites in rural areas was gas prices. While controlling gas prices and overall state economy is outside of the scope of the SCORP, one way this barrier could be addressed is by encouraging projects that would provide outdoor recreation within walking distance of rural communities. These could include multi-use trails and elevated walkways within or around rural communities, boat launches at local lakes or rivers, fishing docks and platforms, the purchase and development of land for local parks and playgrounds, and so much more.

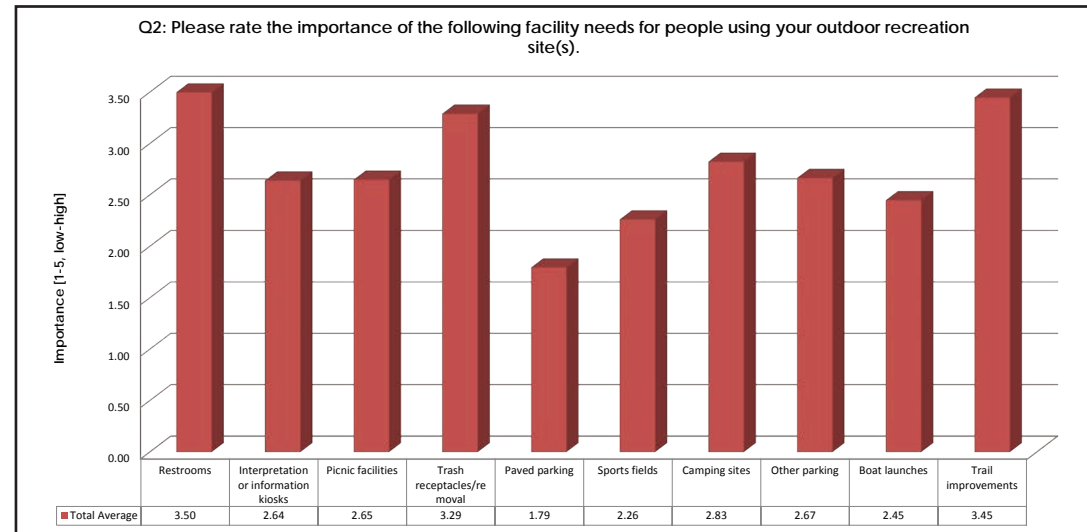
Lack of parking emerged as an important barrier in the Railbelt and projects aimed at improving, expanding, or creating parking areas should be considered important and encouraged in and near Railbelt communities. Paved parking consistently ranked lower than "other parking," indicating that though additional parking is needed, managers generally don't care whether it is a gravel or paved parking area.

The following figures depict the statewide results of the survey.

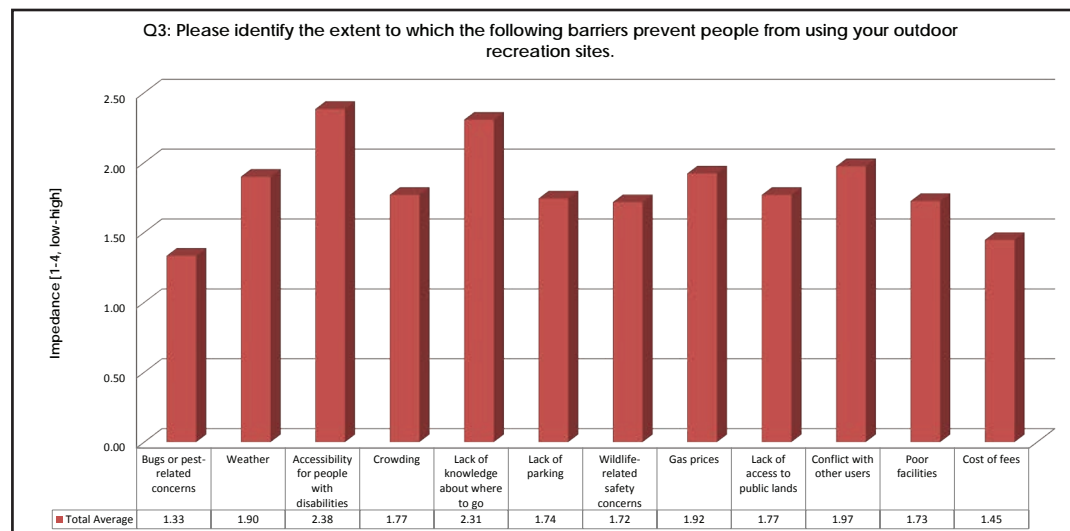
Question 1: Please rate the importance of the following management needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).



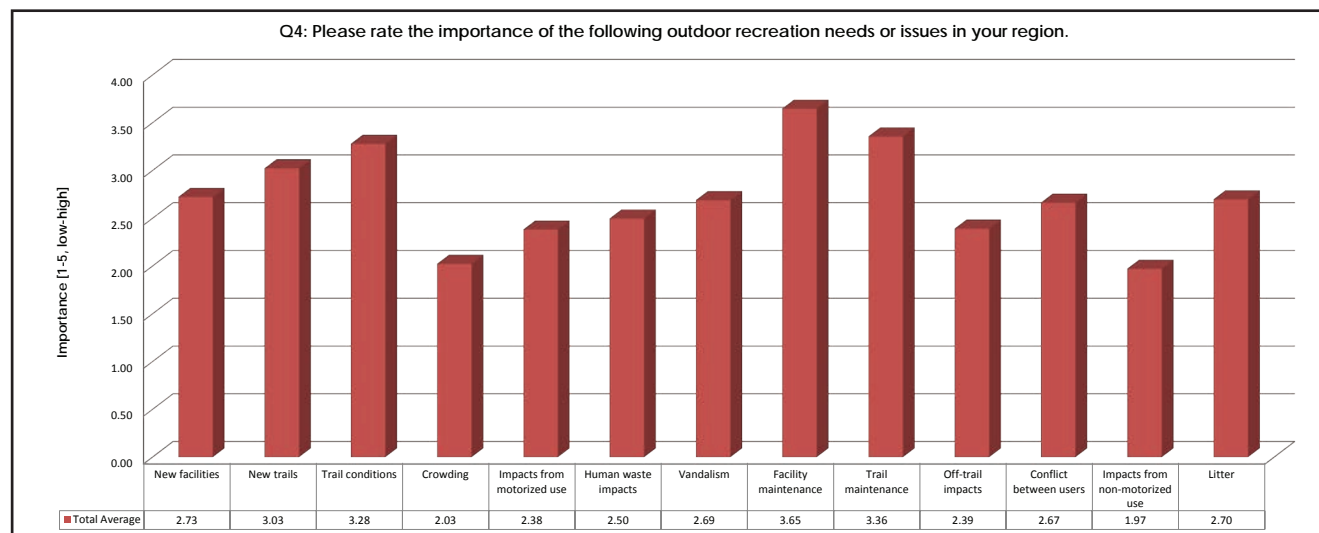
Question 2: Please rate the importance of the following facility needs for people using your outdoor recreation site(s).



Question 3: Please identify the extent to which the following barriers prevent people from using your outdoor recreation sites.



Question 4: Please rate the importance of the following outdoor recreation needs or issues in your region.





SCOOP

Spruce with ice, Southeast Alaska

Worth to the Future

APPENDIX B: SURVEY OF RECREATION PROFESSIONALS ABOUT FACILITY INVENTORY

Results of the Overall Needs of Recreation Providers described in Appendix A are associated with the Facilities Inventory appearing here. See the introduction to Appendix A for more information about the entire survey's methodology, process, and response rate.

SURVEY METHODS

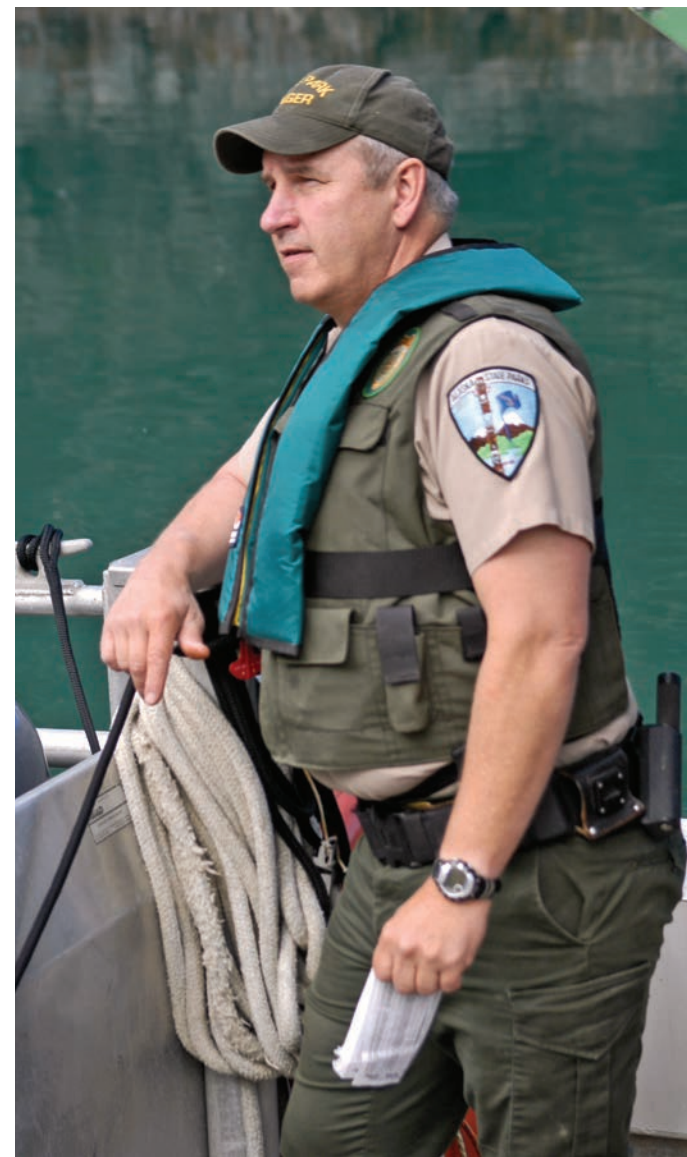
The survey asked respondents how many parks or units and how many acres of park or units they managed. In addition, the survey asked respondents to enumerate the recreational facilities in their parks or units. Facility categories included campgrounds, campsites, dump stations, docks, boat ramps, picnic shelters, play areas, outdoor and indoor swimming areas, trails, etc. Respondents were also asked to break out the number of ADA facilities under their management. Acknowledging that the facilities listed in the survey were not comprehensive, respondents were provided with an "other" category and asked to specify if they managed other types of recreational facilities.

As stated previously in Appendix A, participation rates were far from optimal and, therefore, the results of this study cannot be interpreted as representative. The results serve merely as indicators of statewide public lands and recreational facilities. Here, too, respondents were broken into groups based on the locations of the parks or units they managed. The inconsistencies are the same as noted previously.

SURVEY RESULTS

To better evaluate the facility inventory that resulted from the survey, facilities were categorized as either resource-based or user-oriented.

Resource-based outdoor recreation differs from user-oriented recreation in that resource-based recreation cannot be provided just anywhere, but is dependent upon some element or combination

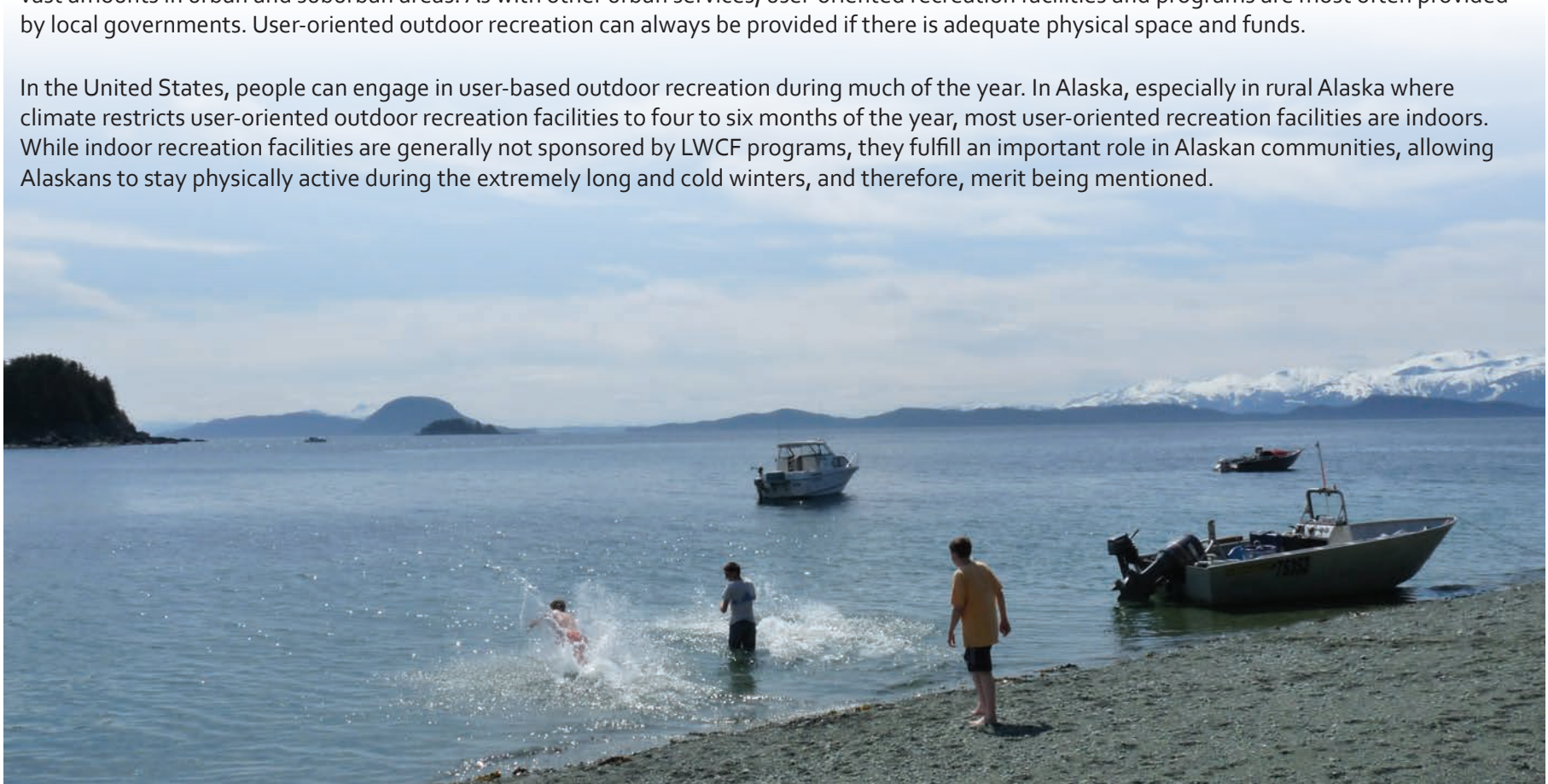


Alaska State Parks ranger, Kachemak Bay

of elements in the natural or cultural environments that cannot be easily duplicated by man. Examples of resource-based recreation include fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, camping, boating, surfing, nature study, and visiting historical sites. Resource-based recreation is typically provided by local, state, and federal agencies.

User-oriented recreation can be provided almost anywhere for the convenience of the user. This category is the broader of the two and includes activities such as golf, Frisbee golf, tennis, baseball, basketball, pool swimming, and playground activities. User-oriented activities are needed in vast amounts in urban and suburban areas. As with other urban services, user-oriented recreation facilities and programs are most often provided by local governments. User-oriented outdoor recreation can always be provided if there is adequate physical space and funds.

In the United States, people can engage in user-based outdoor recreation during much of the year. In Alaska, especially in rural Alaska where climate restricts user-oriented outdoor recreation facilities to four to six months of the year, most user-oriented recreation facilities are indoors. While indoor recreation facilities are generally not sponsored by LWCF programs, they fulfill an important role in Alaskan communities, allowing Alaskans to stay physically active during the extremely long and cold winters, and therefore, merit being mentioned.



North Island beach in Channel Islands State Marine Park

RESOURCE-BASED OUTDOOR RECREATION

The inventory of resource-based recreational facilities shows that, by and large, the Railbelt manages the majority of these facilities. This should not be surprising, considering that it is also the most densely populated survey area. There were, however, some notable exceptions. Though the Railbelt contained more parks or outdoor recreation units, the acreage encompassed by Rural parks and units (66,270,039 acres) grossly surpassed the total acreage of parks and units in both the Railbelt (4,146,541 acres) and Southeast (111,356 acres). More docks (50) were also reported in Southeast than in either the Railbelt (34) or Rural (25) areas.

Another interesting thing that emerged from this set of data was that Southeast area respondents reported that a much higher percentage of trails are accessible by ADA standards, although, it must be noted that they also reported far fewer trails than did the Railbelt and Rural areas. However, these results might not accurately reflect the conditions in these areas; they could be merely an artifact of this data set, skewed by an unrepresentative sample size. Recreational land managers from the Rural survey area reported the smallest percentages of trails that were ADA.



North Island beach in Channel Islands State Marine Park

PARKS OR UNITS

Area	Number of Parks/Units	Acres of Parks/Units
Railbelt	484	4,146,541
Southeast	443	111,356
Rural	138	66,270,039
Total	1065	70,527,936

SUMMER TRAILS

Area	Motorized only	Motorized only ADA	Non-motorized only	Non-motorized only ADA	Multi-Use	Multi-Use ADA	Miles of ADA Summer Trails
Railbelt	301	0	408	25 (6.1 % ADA)	881	7 (0.8% ADA)	44
Southeast	1	1 (100% ADA)	18	5 (27.8% ADA)	4	3 (75% ADA)	20
Rural	100	0	24	1 (4.2% ADA)	113	1 (0.9% ADA)	N/A
Total	402	1 (0.2% ADA)	450	31 (6.9% ADA)	998	11 (0.1% ADA)	64+

WINTER TRAILS

Area	Motorized only	Motorized only ADA	Non-motorized only	Non-motorized only ADA	Multi-Use	Multi-Use ADA	Miles of ADA Winter Trails
Railbelt	313	0	409	24 (5.9% ADA)	800	8 (1% ADA)	24
Southeast	3	0	8	4 (50% ADA)	3	2 (66.7% ADA)	21
Rural	18	0	20	0	30	1 (3.3% ADA)	N/A
Total	334	0	437	28 (6.4% ADA)	833	11 (0.1% ADA)	45+

GREENBELTS

Area	Greenbelts	Acreage of Greenbelts
Railbelt	17	3444
Southeast	31	33
Rural	0	0
Total	48	3477

WATER-BASED RECREATION

Area	Docks	ADA Docks	Boat Ramps	ADA Boat Ramps	Outdoor Swimming	ADA Outdoor Swimming
Railbelt	34	14	42	16	22	2
Southeast	50	11	20	6	7	2
Rural	25	0	7	0	4	0
Total	109	25	69	22	33	4

WILDLIFE VIEWING AREAS AND OVERLOOKS

Area	Wildlife Viewing Areas	ADA Wildlife Viewing Areas	Overlooks	ADA Overlooks
Railbelt	39	37	37	32
Southeast	15	7	6	3
Rural	3	0	9	4
Total	57	44	52	39

WINTER RECREATION

Area	Sledding Area	ADA Sledding Area	Motorized Winter Rec Area	ADA Motorized Winter Rec Area
Railbelt	8	3	13	4
Southeast	1	0	1	1
Rural	0	0	1	0
Total	9	3	15	5

WINTER RECREATION: ALPINE SKI AREAS

Area	Snowboarding Area	ADA Snowboarding Area	Luge/Bobsled Areas	ADA Luge/Bobsled Areas	Backcountry Areas	ADA Backcountry Areas
Railbelt	4	1	0	0	5	1
Southeast	0	0	0	0	2	0
Rural	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	4	1	0	0	8	1

USER-ORIENTED RECREATION

As noted previously, though Alaskans enjoy outdoor user-oriented recreation, they can only do so for four to six month out of the year. Because of this, many user-oriented recreation facilities are indoors. The survey didn't require respondents to specify if venues such as basketball courts or ice rinks were indoors or outdoors. So, some of the facilities reported in this inventory might be outdoors and some might be indoors. Here, too, the overwhelming majority of facilities reported were located in the Railbelt.

CAMPING FACILITIES

Area	Campgrounds	Campsites	ADA Campsites	Dump Stations	Public-Use Cabins	ADA Public-Use Cabins
Railbelt	94	3052	602	14	59	11
Southeast	22	372	153	1	16	2
Rural	9	104	7	3	19	0
Total	125	3528	762	18	94	13

PICNIC SHELTERS AND PLAY AREAS

Area	Picnic Shelters	ADA Picnic Shelters	Play Areas	ADA Play Areas
Railbelt	158	127	128	99
Southeast	31	14	8	5
Rural	5	3	6	1
Total	194	144	142	105

USER-BASED WATER RECREATION

Area	Indoor Swimming	ADA Indoor Swimming
Railbelt	13	13
Southeast	1	1
Rural	2	1
Total	16	15

TARGET FACILITIES AND FAIRGROUNDS

Area	Target Facilities	ADA Target Facilities	Fairgrounds	ADA Fairgrounds
Railbelt	5	3	3	3
Southeast	2	2	0	0
Rural	1	0	1	0
Total	8	5	4	3

WINTER RECREATION

Area	Hockey Rinks	ADA Hockey Rinks	Ice-Skating Rinks	ADA Ice-Skating Rinks	Warming Huts	ADA Warming Huts
Railbelt	12	12	7	6	2	1
Southeast	0	0	3	1	0	0
Rural	0	0	0	0	6	0
Total	12	12	10	7	8	1

WINTER RECREATION: ALPINE SKI AREAS

Area	Developed Lifts	ADA Developed Lifts	Warming Huts	ADA Warming Huts	Ski Jumps	ADA Ski Jumps
Railbelt	4	1	1	1	3	0
Southeast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	1	1	1	3	0

SKATE PARKS

Area	Skate Parks	ADA Skate Parks
Railbelt	6	6
Southeast	2	1
Rural	1	1
Total	9	8

SPORTS

Area	Playing Courts	ADA Playing Courts	Diamonds and Fields	ADA Diamonds and Fields
Railbelt	81	80	136	128
Southeast	8	8	13	13
Rural	9	2	6	2
Total	98	90	155	143

GOLF AND FRISBEE GOLF

Area	Golf Courses	ADA Golf Courses	Frisbee Golf Courses	ADA Frisbee Golf Courses
Railbelt	3	3	7	2
Southeast	0	0	0	0
Rural	0	0	1	0
Total	3	3	8	2

DISCUSSION OF FACILITY INVENTORY

As a whole, this facility inventory, though not statistically representative due to sample size, indicates that trails are a major factor in outdoor recreation. It is safe to assume that many trails exist which were not included in this survey. This also means that the percentages of trails that are accessible and up to ADA standards, as shown in this inventory, are probably not accurate either. In spite of this lack of representativeness, this inventory does highlight the need for more ADA trails, including trails for motorized, non-motorized, multi-use, and winter and summer use.

ADA facilities, in general, are lacking in nearly every category and in every survey area. When considering grant applications for future projects, those with ADA components should be encouraged and strongly considered.

Another unexpected result, as seen in this inventory, is a lack of winter recreation options. In a state where winters can last five to eight months, this is surprising. One category where this does not hold true is trails; the number of summer and winter trails are comparable in all survey areas. The results of this survey inventory do not explain why there are more or less of certain facilities. Perhaps people prefer to recreate indoors during winter, and as previously stated, many of the user-oriented facilities might be indoor facilities. However, it is possible that more people would engage in a wider variety of outdoor winter recreation, such as hockey, ice-skating, and sledding, if more outdoor winter recreation facilities were available. This is especially true in smaller communities, such as those in the Southeast and Rural survey areas.

The Survey for Recreational Professionals provided an "other" category to allow respondents to include recreational facilities not listed. Respondents in the Railbelt survey area reported the following facilities not in the survey list:

- Band shell (outdoor concert location)
- Bike Park
- Table Tennis tables (There are three tennis tables, possibly located outdoors, though not specified in the survey. All three are ADA.)

Respondents in the Southeast survey area reported the following facilities not in the survey list:

- Hot Spring Tubs (remote)
- Campsites (Campsites were included in the survey inventory and the respondent who listed campsites in the “other” category also reported 20 campsites under the “number of campsites” category. Ten of these are ADA.)

Respondents in the Rural survey area reported the following facilities not in the survey list:

- Buskin River Fishing Platform (This is an ADA facility.)
- Emergency Cabins (total of five)

More bike parks, hot spring facilities, and fishing platforms likely exist, but were not included in the survey because these and the other facilities listed in the “other” category were not specifically called out in the survey. These facilities should be considered for inclusion in subsequent surveys for the SCORP.



Skinny Raven Twilight 12k (TTK) running race.

APPENDIX C: YOUTH SURVEY REPORT

This appendix contains the full report of the youth survey conducted by Doug Whittaker in April 2015 for the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The information in this report was used as a foundation for Chapter 4 of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, "Alaska's Youth and Outdoor Recreation."



Unloading gear at Callisto Canyon Cabin in Caines Head State Recreation Area

Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan

Youth Survey Findings



Doug Whittaker • Confluence Research and Consulting
for
Alaska State Parks • Department of Natural Resources
April 2015

Worth to the Future

Introduction

Every five years, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) updates the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Components of this plan report on surveys of the general public and recreation providers. Results from these surveys show how Alaskans recreate outdoors and help communities plan for future recreation opportunities.

The SCORP also helps make funding decisions for Alaska communities through grant programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Over 300 sites in Alaska have received LWCF grants over the years, developing or improving local parks, playgrounds, sports fields, boat launches, or fishing, hiking, and camping areas.

As part of the SCORP revision, the DNR surveys included a sample of middle and high school students during spring 2014. The brief survey asked respondents to report the frequency with which they participated in several summer and winter outdoor recreation activities, their most important activities, and activities they were interested in trying in the future. The survey also asked questions about students' screen activities (e.g., playing video games, watching TV/movies, social media use, and email/texting) and a list of potential barriers to doing as much outdoor recreation as they would like.

Results and findings are reported in the following document. After a summary of the survey methods, findings are presented by topic.

Methods

The population of interest was middle school and high school students in Alaska, with adequate sub-samples of 1) males and females; and 2) students from remote communities, small communities on Alaska's road network, and larger cities.

Alaska State Parks developed a sampling frame by sending requests to 80 school principals across the state, including those in remote communities, small towns, and larger cities. For schools that chose to participate, letters were sent to parents/guardians of students to explain the survey and ask for consent to participate (because students are minors). Although the sampling frame has purposive and systematic elements (clusters of schools in different regions and communities), the survey essentially used a ***convenience sample*** because some schools chose not to participate and respondents were self-selected (only included those who obtained parental consent).

Table 1 provides the number of respondents from each school, organized by size of community. Information about the geographic region in the state is also provided. The sample included 202 females (56%) and 157 males (44%); 47 respondents did not answer the question about gender.

Table 1. Participation by high school and categories of communities.

High school	Total
Kotzebue (Northwest)	46
St Michael (Northwest)	24
Dillingham (Western)	41
Metlakatla (Southeast)	33
Off-road network communities (sub-total)	144
Homer (Southcentral)	26
Soldotna (Southcentral)	19
Kenai Central (Southcentral)	177
Small towns < 10,000 population (sub-total)	222
Juneau-Douglas (Southeast)	35
East Anchorage (Southcentral)	5
Larger cities (sub-total)	40
All schools	406

In general, the survey provides some insight into Alaskan high school outdoor recreation participation, but results are probably best viewed as indicators than precise estimates for statewide populations. Although this SCORP youth survey had a substantially larger sample than the 2009 edition (407 vs. 248), geographic and community-size limitations remain. Results help identify relationships among variables, directing attention for additional research, but may not be sufficiently representative to adequately test hypotheses. Specific comments about survey representativeness are given below.

- The sample frame for off-the-road-network communities is reasonably representative for coastal communities, but may not adequately represent smaller interior villages.
- The sample frame for small towns on the road network is reasonably representative for the Kenai Peninsula, but less so for towns in the interior (e.g. North Pole, Wasilla, Palmer, Glennallen, Tok) or Southeast Alaska (e.g., Ketchikan, Wrangell, Sitka, Haines, etc.).
- The sample frame for larger cities is unlikely representative; Fairbanks and Anchorage schools generally chose not to participate. In addition, the Juneau-Douglas sample was small. Statewide and larger cities results should therefore be considered with caution.

Summer recreation participation

Participation frequency

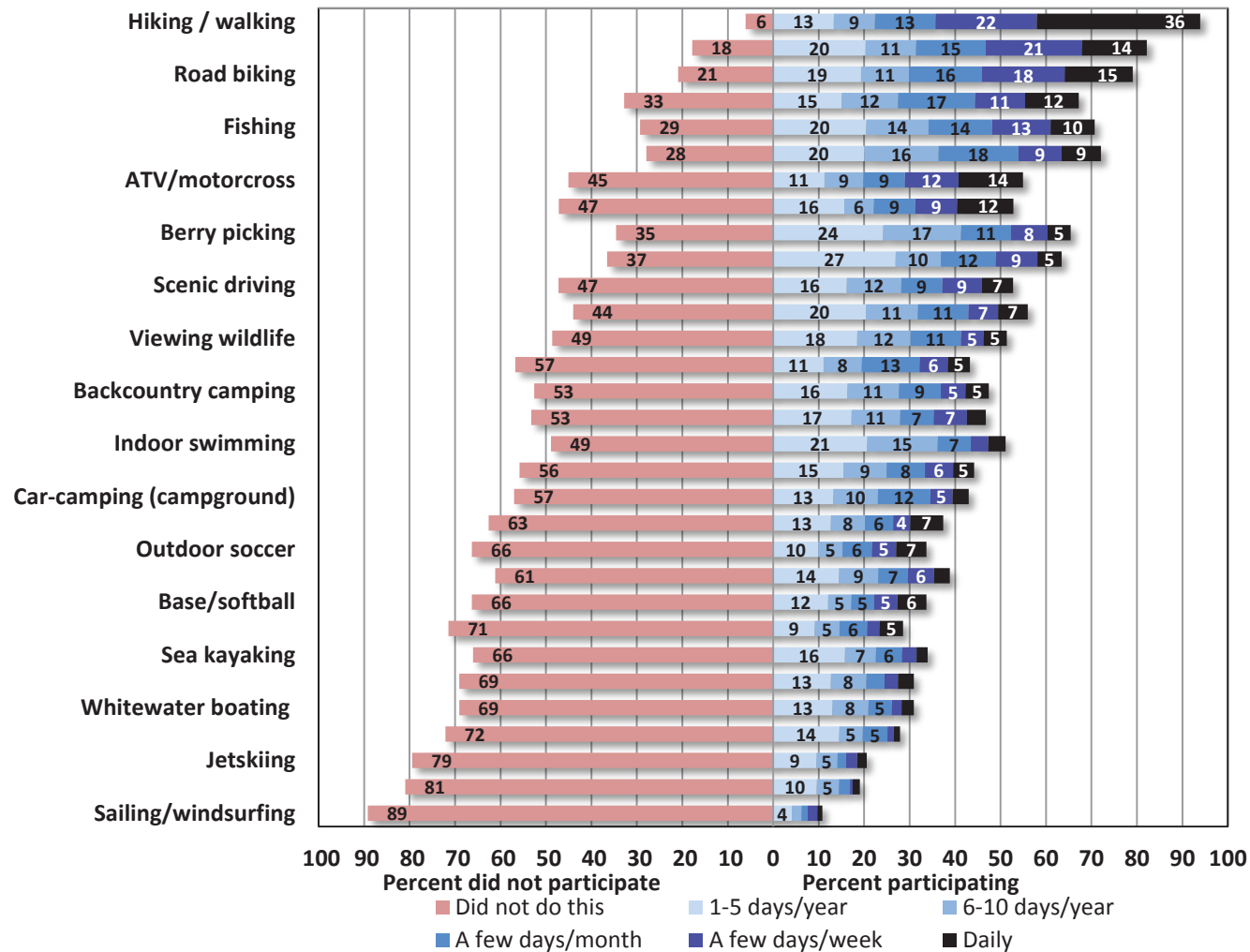
Respondents were asked to report how frequently they participated in 31 different summer-season activities (or specify other activities). Figure 1 summarizes responses for all respondents (percentages).

Activities:

- Walking / hiking / walking your dog, etc.
- Running or jogging
- Biking (roads or paved trails)
- Mountain biking (off road / trails)
- Rollerblading / skate boarding
- Fishing (non-commercial)
- Outdoor soccer
- Outdoor football
- Baseball / softball
- Outdoor basketball
- Outdoor volleyball
- Outdoor tennis
- ATV riding or motocross
- Scenic driving
- Indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, stationary bikes, machines, etc.)
- RV or car-camping in campground
- Backcountry camping
- Relaxing at a local park
- Relaxing at a cabin or camp
- Viewing or photographing wildlife
- Swimming (indoor pools)
- Swimming (lakes or rivers)
- Beachcombing or clamming
- Sea or lake kayaking
- River kayaking, canoeing, or rafting
- Powerboating on rivers, lakes, or ocean
- Sailing or windsurfing
- Personal watercraft (jetskiing)
- Hunting
- Berry picking
- Rock climbing
- Other (please specify)

Responses:

- I didn't do this
- About 1 to 5 days total
- About 6 to 10 days total
- A few days each month
- A few days each week
- Almost daily



Labels for responses less than 5% not shown.

Figure 1. Frequency of reported participation for summer activities (all respondents).

Summer recreation participation results suggest several findings.

- There are 13 activities with a majority reporting some participation. In the 2009 youth survey, only one activity (basketball) was reported by a majority. Methodological differences probably explain this result; there is little reason to believe that outdoor recreation has become vastly more popular in the past five years.
- The highest participation was for **hiking/walking**, with over 90% reporting some participation and over a third participating daily. No other activity had more than 15% reporting daily participation.
- The top three activities (**hiking/walking, running, road biking**) are facilitated by multi-use trail systems, and have an exercise focus. Taken together with indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, etc.), the fourth most popular activity, results suggest that working-out is a major recreation focus for many respondents.
- ATV riding / motocross was seventh on the list, with 55% participating (and 26% participating daily or a few days per week). Motorized use trails are likely to remain a priority for substantial numbers of Alaskan youth.
- Motorized boating sees relatively less participation (43%) than motorized trail use, but higher than sea kayaking (34%) and canoeing/kayaking/rafting on rivers and lakes (31%).
- Fishing (71%) has much higher participation than hunting (44%), but many non-consumptive activities see participation at similarly high levels (especially trail activities).
- Scenic driving, often high on the list of recreation activities among adults, sees less participation among Alaskan youth.
- Backcountry camping (47%) showed higher participation rates than car camping (43%), which is the converse of most national recreation surveys among adults.

There were several ***differences in participation rates for males and females***. Based on average scores (with 1=did not participate to 6=daily participation), substantial differences (0.3 on the scale) include the following.

Males participate more frequently than females:

- Mountain biking
- Outdoor basketball
- Hunting
- ATV riding
- Rock climbing
- Backcountry camping
- Skateboarding
- Jetskiing

Females participate more frequently than males:

- Viewing wildlife
- Relaxing in a park
- Outdoor volleyball
- Hiking/walking
- River/lake swimming

Respondents named a few other summer activities not in the original list of 31:

- Relaxing in free time
- Laying in the sun
- Motocross
- Playing video games
- Sled dragging

Most important summer activities

Respondents were asked to list their two most important activities from the list of 31. Figure 2 shows results for all respondents.

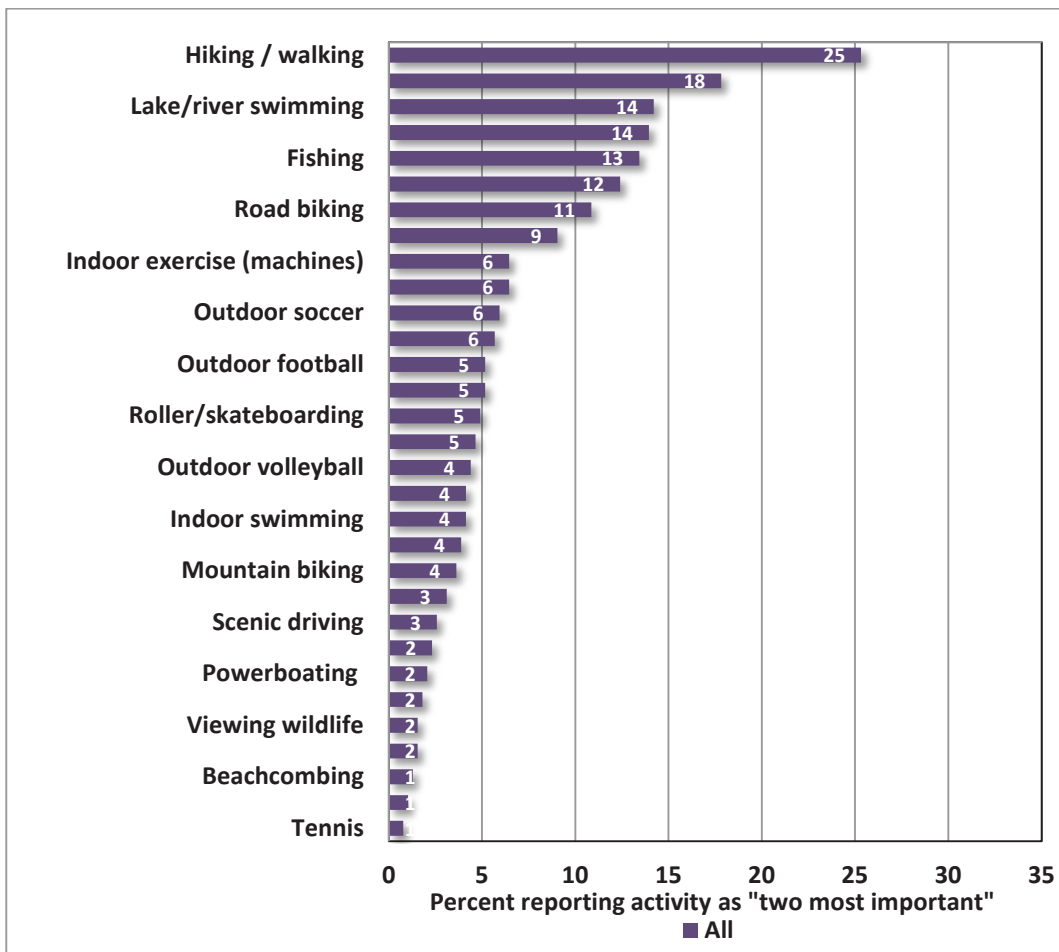


Figure 2. Percent naming activities as one of their two “most important.”

Ratings show that some activities with lower participation rates remain very important to Alaskan youth, including 1) swimming in rivers and lakes; 2) ATV / motocross; 3) fishing; 4) outdoor basketball; and 5) hunting.

Importance ratings also suggest considerable diversity among Alaskan youth, with 20 out of 31 activities reported by at least 5% (numbers are rounded). However, there are about ten activities that are more specialized and remain important to relatively smaller proportions of Alaskan youth (e.g., jetskiing, scenic driving, sea kayaking, powerboating, river/lake non-motorized boating, viewing wildlife, sailing, beach combing, rock climbing, and tennis).

Other important activities specified by respondents included:

- Cross country running
- Drift-netting
- Freestyle biking
- Longboarding
- Scootering
- Skateboarding
- Trap shooting
- Traveling/ trips with friends and rock concerts

Activities Alaskan youth would like to try (but don't do now)

Respondents were asked to name two activities they currently did not do but would like to try. Results may indicate interest in emerging recreation activities or suggest activities that may have use increases in the future. The most frequently named activities are listed below.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Sailing (16%) | • Sea kayaking (11%) |
| • River / lake canoeing kayaking, and rafting (15%) | • Hunting (10%) |
| • Jet skiing (14%) | • Mountain biking (9%) |
| • Rock climbing (13%) | • Skateboarding (8%) |
| • ATV / motocross (12%) | • Backcountry camping (7%) |

Worth to the Future

There were a few substantial differences between males and females on activities respondents would like to try. Males were substantially more interested in ATV riding and outdoor football; females were more interested in sea kayaking, outdoor volleyball, and rollerblading/skateboarding.

Winter participation

Participation frequency

Respondents were asked to report how frequently they participated in 16 different winter-season activities (or specify other activities). Activities and response options are given below; Figure 3 summarizes responses for all respondents (percentages), ordered by their average scores (1=did not do to 6=daily). Discussion of findings follows.

Activities:

- Walking / hiking / walking your dog, etc.
- Ice hockey or skating (outdoors)
- Ice hockey or skating (indoors)
- Indoor sports (basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, and so on)
- Indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, stationary bikes, machines, and so on)
- Swimming (indoor pools)
- Downhill skiing / snowboarding
- Cross country skiing on trails
- Backcountry skiing
- Snowmachine riding
- Dog mushing
- Snowshoeing

- Sledding
- Winter biking
- Backcountry camping
- Ice climbing
- Other (please specify)

Responses:

- I didn't do this
- About 1 to 5 days total
- About 6 to 10 days total
- A few days each month
- A few days each week
- Almost daily

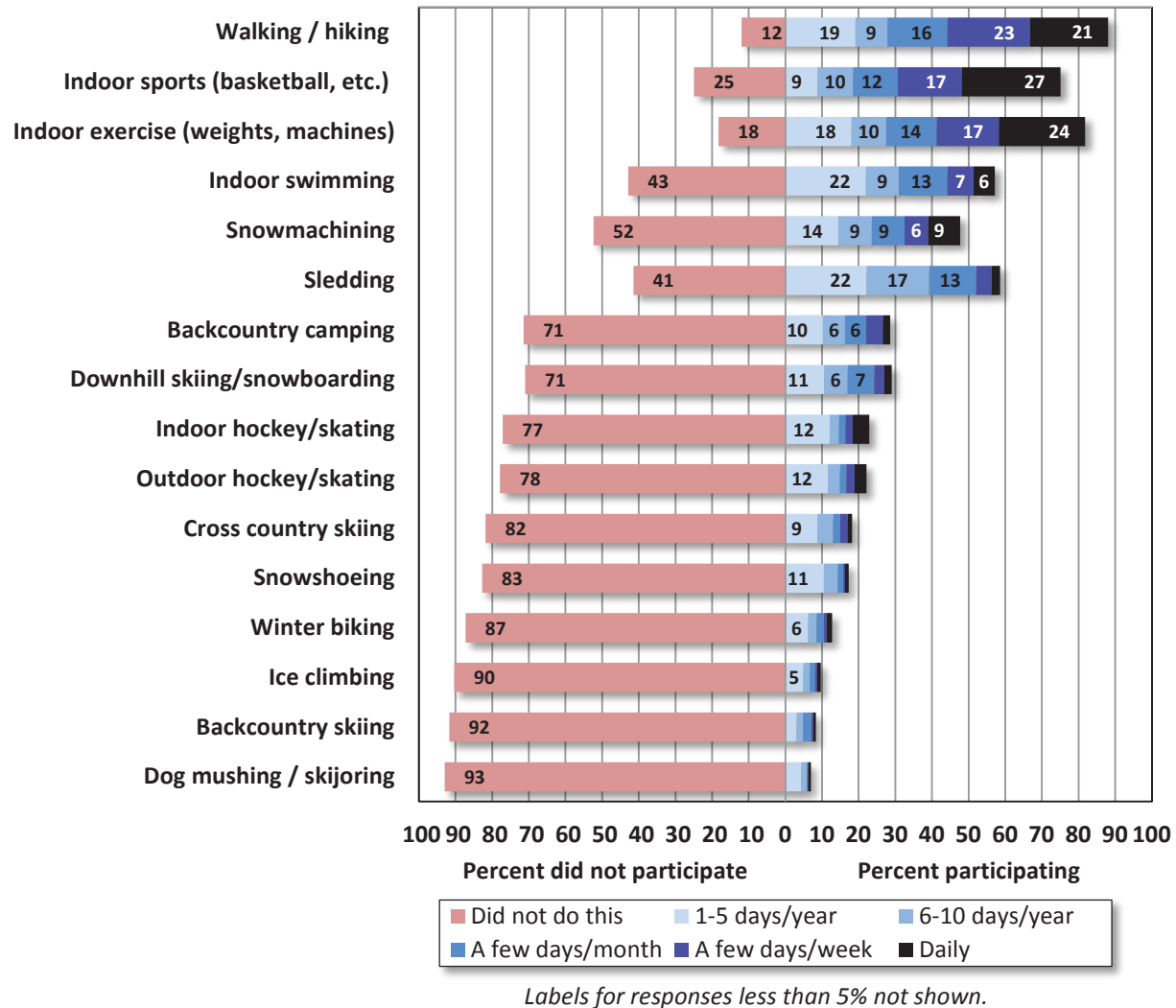


Figure 3. Frequency of reported participation for winter activities (all respondents).

Worth to the Future

- There are only six activities with a majority reporting some participation, and in general, participating rates are lower than during summer. Alaska's weather (cold and dark winters) is probably the simplest explanation for this difference.
- The highest participation was for **hiking/walking**, with nearly 90% reporting some participation and 21% participating daily. However, **indoor sports** (e.g., basketball, volleyball) and **indoor exercise** (e.g., weights, machines) saw similar participation rates and even higher reports of daily participation (27 and 24%, respectively).
- The next three higher-participation activities included **indoor swimming**, **snowmachining**, and **sledding**, with about half of respondents participating (although relatively few on a daily basis).
- All the remaining activities saw less than 30% participation, with less than 10% participating more than a few days per month.

Average differences between genders were small for most winter activities. However, there are a few activities that males report more frequently; the greatest differences were for snowmachining, backcountry camping, winter biking, and ice climbing (although all of these activities except snowmachining were conducted relatively infrequently). Females did not report participating in any activity substantially more than males in winter.

Respondents named several other winter activities not in the original list of 16:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Mountain biking (4) | • Hanging out with my friends |
| • Hunting (3) | • Horse riding |
| • Biking (2) | • Fishing |
| • Long boarding (2) | • Jiu-Jitsu |
| • Boxing | • Jogging |
| • Cheerleading | • Laying in the sun |
| • Climbed on trees, cars, houses and worked out. | • Listening to music |
| • Concert in Seattle | • Running on needle ice |
| • Cultural dancing | • Sleeping |
| • Four wheeler rides | • Snowball fights |
| • Going to the playground | • Softball (2) |
| | • Wrestling |

Most important winter activities

Respondents were asked to list their two most important activities from the list of 16. Figure 4 shows results for all respondents. Results largely follow from participation frequencies described above, although indoor sports rose to the top and indoor exercise dropped below snowmachining, and downhill skiing also became more prominent. Both hiking/walking and snowmachining are dependent on good trail systems.

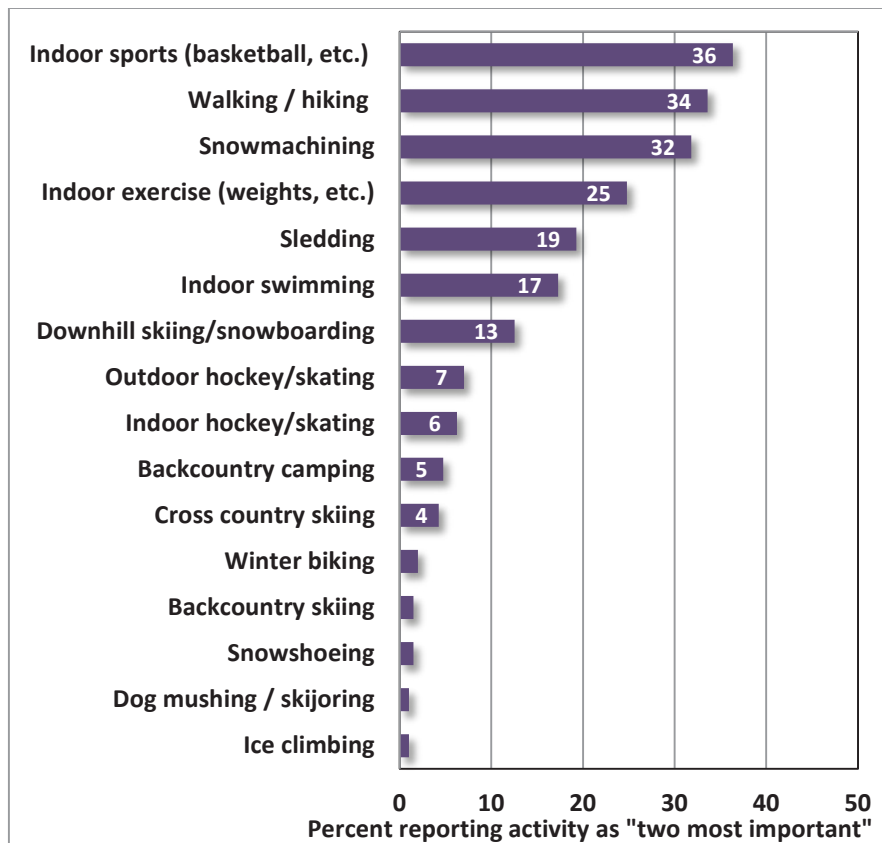


Figure 4. Percent naming winter activities as one of their two “most important.”

Other winter activities specified by respondents as “most important” include:

- Hunting (4)
- Skate boarding (3)
- Playing video games (2)
- Fishing (2)
- Wrestling (2)
- Baseball (outside)
- Hang out with buddies.
- Insanity teen workout
- Laying in the sun
- Motocross
- Mountain biking
- Paintball
- Riding my four wheeler
- Running on needle ice
- Running outdoors
- Snow ball fights
- Softball
- Trapping

There were a few differences between genders for most important winter activities. Males were more likely to report downhill skiing/snowboarding, and backcountry camping, while females were more likely to report walking/hiking, indoor sports, and sledding.

Winter activities youth want to try (but don't do now)

Respondents were asked to name two winter activities they currently did not do that they would like to try. Results may indicate interest in emerging recreation activities or suggest those that may see use increases in the future. The most frequently named activities are listed below.

- Ice climbing (29%)
- Dog mushing (24%)
- Snowmachining (23%)
- Downhill skiing/snowboarding (21%)
- Outdoor hockey/skating (15%)
- Indoor hockey/skating (12%)
- Winter biking (12%)
- Indoor swimming (10%)
- Backcountry camping (8%)

There were a few differences between genders for winter activities they don't do now but would like to try. Males were more likely to report snowmachining, ice climbing, and winter biking, while females were more likely to report sledding and snowshoeing.

Screen activities and reading

The survey asked respondents to report the frequency of their “screen activities” (e.g., watching TV and movies, social media, playing computer or video games, texting and emailing) and reading books. There were five response categories as below.

- Never
- Rarely (One day per week)
- Occasionally (A few days per week)
- Frequently (Daily or almost daily)
- Very frequently (Over 2 hours per day)

Results for all respondents are given in Figure 5 (percent providing reach response).

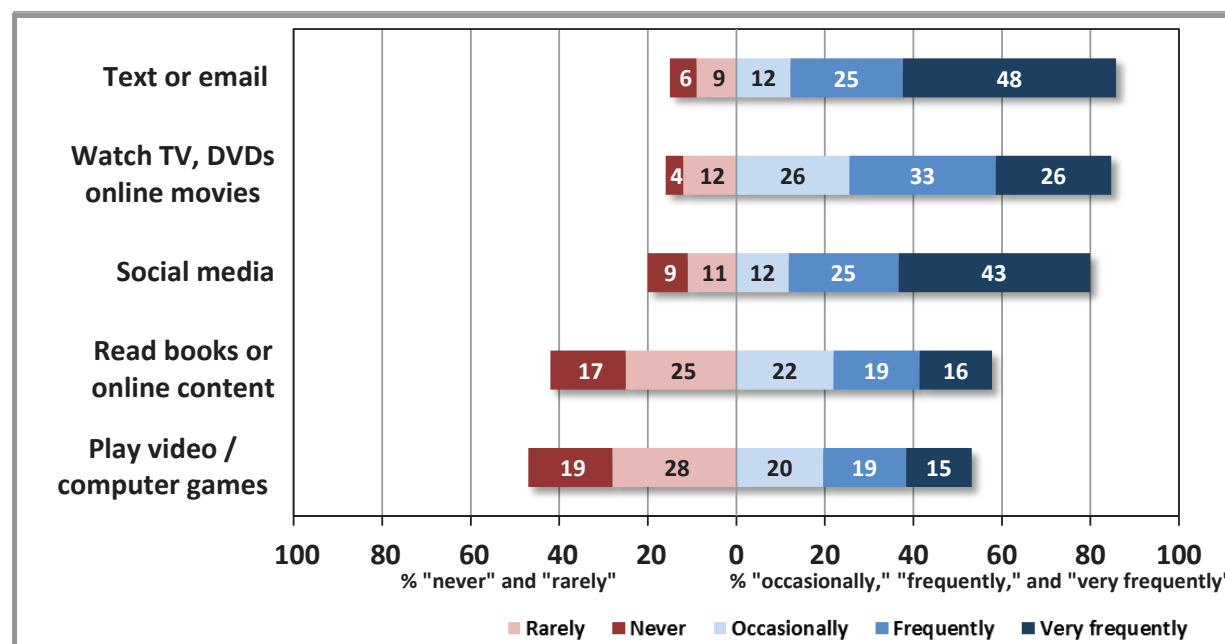


Figure 5. Percent reporting frequencies of different “screen activities” and reading.

Results suggest several findings.

- All four screen activities and reading are relatively frequent activities among Alaskan youth. Large majorities report doing each at least occasionally (a few days a week). Less than 10% never text, use social media, or watch TV.
- Texting, TV/DVDs, and social media are more frequent screen activities than video games, but are also more frequent than reading.
- Nearly half (48%) of all youth text/email and 43% use social media over two hours per day. Only a quarter report watching TV as long, and about 15% each report playing video games or reading over two hours per day.
- There were several statistically significant differences between males and females for these variables. Females reported reading much more, (and texting, and social media slightly more) frequently than males, while males reported playing video games more than females. There were no statistical differences in their TV/DVD viewing frequency. Average scores (on the five point scale), t-tests, and p values that compare those means for the two groups are given in Table 2 (t-tests and p values assess whether two averages are statistically different; $p < .05$ are said to be significantly different, and smaller p values increase that likelihood).

Table 2. Comparing males and females on average screen activity frequency.

Activity	Males average	Females average	t	p
Reading	2.6	3.2	4.7	.000
Video games	3.1	2.6	-4.1	.000
Texting/email	3.8	4.2	2.8	.006
Social media	3.6	4.0	2.6	.010
TV/DVDs	3.6	3.8	not significant	

- Surprisingly, there were no statistically significant differences between the three types of regional populations (remote communities, smaller cities, and larger cities) for these variables. A tentative conclusion is that youth in more vs. less rural parts of the state pursue screen time activities at similar rates.

- Correlations between the five variables are given below. In general, relationships were surprisingly weak with two exceptions (texting – social media at .58; and video games – TV at .35). TV was also moderately correlated with reading, texting, and social media. We expected reading and at least some screen activities would be inversely correlated, but none were statistically significant. With the increasing ubiquity of smart phones and tablets in youth life, many people may be reporting “more of everything” rather than an increase in one activity that decreases participation in another.

Table 3. Correlations between participation in different screen activities and reading.

Activity	Video games	Texting / email	Social media	TV / movies
Reading	.13*	.01	-.04	.17**
Video games		.02	.11*	.35**
Texting / email			.58**	.19*
Social media				.22**

** is significant at $p < .005$; * is significant at $p < .05$.

Screen time correlations with activity participation

We created a variable that combined participation in all the screen and reading activities to compare with activity participation. Correlations with summer and winter activities are given in Tables 4 and 5. Results suggest several findings.

- Only two winter activities were statistically correlated with screen time frequency, and in both cases it was positive (more screen time was consistent with more frequent recreation participation). Interestingly, both were also indoor activities. For the remaining 14 activities, the correlation was not significant, and only half were inversely related.
- Taken together, this suggests that reported screen time frequency by itself is not strongly related to recreation participation. Although popular press (Louv, 2005) and limited research (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005) have suggested “videophilia” (love of screen activities) is replacing outdoor activities

- Our data do not provide information about longer-term trends in recreation participation or screen time (and do not address Louv's larger hypothesis that screen activities have increased at the expense of outdoor recreation over time). However, these data suggest that 2014 youth who report more screen time also recreate slightly more rather than less often.
- Potential explanations include sample self-selection (which could include more high achieving students who do "more of everything"), social desirability bias (respondents might exaggerate both recreation participation or screen time due to perceived researcher interest in those variables), or strategic bias (respondents might exaggerate recreation activity or screen use because they perceive it might lead to some benefit for their school or themselves). Disentangling such influences is outside the scope of the current study, but a good avenue for future research.
- We also explored correlations between recreation participation and specific screen activities. The only screen activity that showed a slightly different pattern was video games, which was slightly more likely to be inversely correlated with recreation participation (20 out of 31 summer activities, 12 out of 16 winter activities). However, only a few of these relationships were statistically significant and all were still weak: jet skis (-.15), outdoor volleyball (-.15), river running (-.14), winter biking (-.11).

Table 4. Correlation between summer activities and “all screen activities” variable.

Activity	Correlation	Significance
All summer activities together	.20	.001
Outdoor soccer	.23	.001
Running or jogging	.19	.001
Walking / hiking / walking your dog, etc.	.18	.001
Swimming (indoor pools)	.18	.001
Outdoor tennis	.17	.002
Outdoor basketball	.16	.003
Relaxing at a local park	.16	.002
Viewing or photographing wildlife	.13	.019
Swimming (lakes or rivers)	.13	.016
Outdoor volleyball	.12	.019
Indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, machines, etc.)	.11	.034
Baseball / softball	.11	.040
Rollerblading / skate boarding	.11	.035
Berry picking	.10	.050
Biking (roads or paved trails)	.10	.053
Scenic driving	.10	.054
ATV riding or motocross	.09	--
Sailing or windsurfing	.09	--
Relaxing at a cabin or camp	.08	--
Beachcombing or clamming	.08	--
Fishing (non-commercial)	.06	--
Outdoor football	.06	--
RV or car-camping in campground	.06	--
Personal watercraft (jetskiing)	.05	--
Sea or lake kayaking	.04	--
Powerboating on rivers, lakes, or ocean	.04	--
Mountain biking (off road / trails)	.03	--
Rock climbing	.03	--
Backcountry camping	.02	--
River kayaking, canoeing, or rafting	.01	--
Hunting	-.05	--

Table 5. Correlation between winter activities and “all screen activities” variable.

Activity	Correlation	Significance
All winter activities together	.07	--
Indoor sports (basketball, volleyball, tennis, and so on)	.18	.001
Indoor exercise (weights, treadmills, machines, and so on)	.12	.023
Swimming (indoor pools)	.09	--
Snowshoeing	.08	--
Dog mushing	.06	--
Winter biking	.05	--
Sledding	.04	--
Walking / hiking / walking your dog, etc.	.02	--
Ice hockey or skating (outdoors)	.00	--
Ice climbing	-.01	--
Backcountry camping	-.02	--
Ice hockey or skating (indoors)	-.02	--
Cross country skiing on trails	-.05	--
Snowmachine riding	-.05	--
Backcountry skiing	-.07	--
Downhill skiing / snowboarding	-.10	--

Other activities

Respondents were asked to check organized activities they participated in during the past two years as an indicator of their other activity levels. Response options are given below; results are given in Table 6.

- Club sports (soccer, football, baseball, hockey, volleyball, running, etc.)
- School sports (cross country, football, volleyball, hockey, basketball, soccer, wrestling, track, etc.)
- School clubs (yearbook, photography, plays, etc.)
- Outside-of-school clubs or organizations (Scouts, 4H, ballet, drama, youth groups, etc.)

Table 6. Percent reporting other activities.

Activity	Percent
School sports	57
Club sports	30
Out-of-school clubs	26
School clubs	21

- School sports are the most popular “other activity” reported by youth, with 57% reporting participation within the last two years. A comparison of this percentage with actual high school sports participation (if Alaska high schools report this) may suggest whether this survey sample is representative of high school students in general, or whether it over-represents “high achieving” students.
- Other activities were reported by 20 to 30% of the sample.
- We created a composite indicator from these four variables to represent a student’s “other activity participation” and correlated it with screen activity frequency. It was weakly correlated with overall screen time (.19), driven mostly by slightly stronger relationships with texting (.22) and social media (.22), but always in the positive direction. As with the screen time – recreation relationship, this suggests that more active youth do more screen activities (especially texting and social media). Statistically, video game frequency just missed being inversely related to other activities. If video games are preventing youth from participating in other activities, it is at a very low level.
- Overall “other activity levels” were also correlated with summer and winter recreation participation, providing more support for the notion that “active youth” are active in school and club activities as well as outdoor recreation. Overall recreation participation was related to “other activity levels” at .28 for summer activities and .29 for winter activities.

Self-assessment: Spend enough time outdoors?

Respondents were asked, “In general, do you spend too little, about the right amount, or too much time doing outdoor activities?” Results are given in Table 7 for the entire sample and both genders.

Table 7. Percent reporting whether they spend too little, the right amount, or too much time outdoors.

Response	Percent all	Percent males	Percent females	Percent remote towns	Percent small towns	Percent large cities
Too little	31	22	39	34	30	30
About right	60	66	55	56	62	60
Too much	9	13	6	10	8	9

- A majority of Alaskan youth think they spend about the “right amount of time” outdoors, but nearly one third think they spend too little time participating in outdoor recreation.
- There were statistically significant differences for this variable among males and females, with more females (39%) expressing concern that they spent too little time outside compared to males (22%).
- Differences between types of communities were generally small, although youth from remote communities were slightly more likely to report too little time outside compared to those in communities on the road network.
- There was a moderate correlation with responses to this variable and reported participation rates. As expected, youth who report more summer recreation participation were less likely to say they participate “too little” ($r=.35$, $p<.001$).
- This variable was not correlated with screen time frequency, and only weakly correlated with “other activity levels” ($r=.14$, $p<.008$). Screen time does not obviously affect self-assessments of whether a respondent spent enough time outdoors, but youth who participate in more activities are slightly less likely to report they spend too little time outdoors. This is more support for the “active kids do more activities” hypothesis, although we might add that “active kids also recognize they do more activities.”

Barriers to recreation participation

Respondents were asked to identify several reasons that may keep them from spending time outdoors. From a list of 16 possible reasons (see list below), respondents could check:

- Not a reason – this doesn't keep me from outdoor activities
- A minor reason I don't spend as much time outdoors
- A major reason I don't spend as much time outdoors

The sixteen possible barriers to participating in more outdoor recreation (in the order they appeared on the survey) included:

- Too busy with homework
- Too busy with other activities
- Too busy doing "screen" activities (video games, social media, texting, watching TV/DVDs, etc.)
- Too busy with work (if you have a job)
- Some activities take too much effort
- Lack of transportation – I can't get to some activities
- I don't have the right equipment for some activities
- I don't have the skills for some activities
- Some activities cost too much
- Bad weather
- My favorite places are too crowded
- My favorite places are too far away
- The places I want to visit can be unsafe (from bears, hypothermia, avalanches, and so on)
- My friends or family don't do the activity
- There are not enough organized activities

Results for all respondents are given in Figure 6, ordered by their average response. Results suggest several findings:

- Three of the top four reasons for spending less time outdoors are related to being “too busy” with 1) other activities, 2) homework, or 3) screen activities. This suggests that youth perceive some tradeoffs between time outdoors and other activities.
- Economic-related barriers were also rated relatively high, with 1) costs too much, 2) lack of transportation, and 3) lack of the right equipment within the top seven reasons.
- A few mid-level reasons are related to respondents’ own skill sets and their friends’ and families’ interests.
- Reasons that land managing agencies may be able to influence are relatively less important. Relatively few respondents’ report that crowded recreation use areas are a major barrier. Similarly, recreation areas that are “too far away” (which might be mitigated by building more facilities) or the lack of organized activities (which agency programs might address) are relatively lower-ranked.
- “Bad weather” is the second highest ranked reason that youth do not do as much outdoor recreation as they’d like, which is perhaps not surprising in a state with substantial weather challenges, at least in fall, winter, and spring. Interestingly, potential unsafe conditions (e.g., bears, avalanches, etc.) were a much lower rated reason. Many youth may not do outdoor activities as often if weather looks like it may reduce their enjoyment, but at least they do not fear many outdoor hazards.
- We examined correlations between potential barriers and 1) summer recreation participation; 2) all screen time activities; and 3) other reported activities. All relationships were relatively weak (r less than .2 or statistically non-significant) with the exception of the relationship with all screen time activities ($r=3.0$, $p<.001$). As expected, respondents who reported more frequent screen activity were more likely to say they spent less time outdoors because they are too busy with screen activities. As discussed earlier, screen time frequency was positively correlated with reported recreation participation, so respondents apparently think their computers keep them from the outdoors more than they report that it actually does.

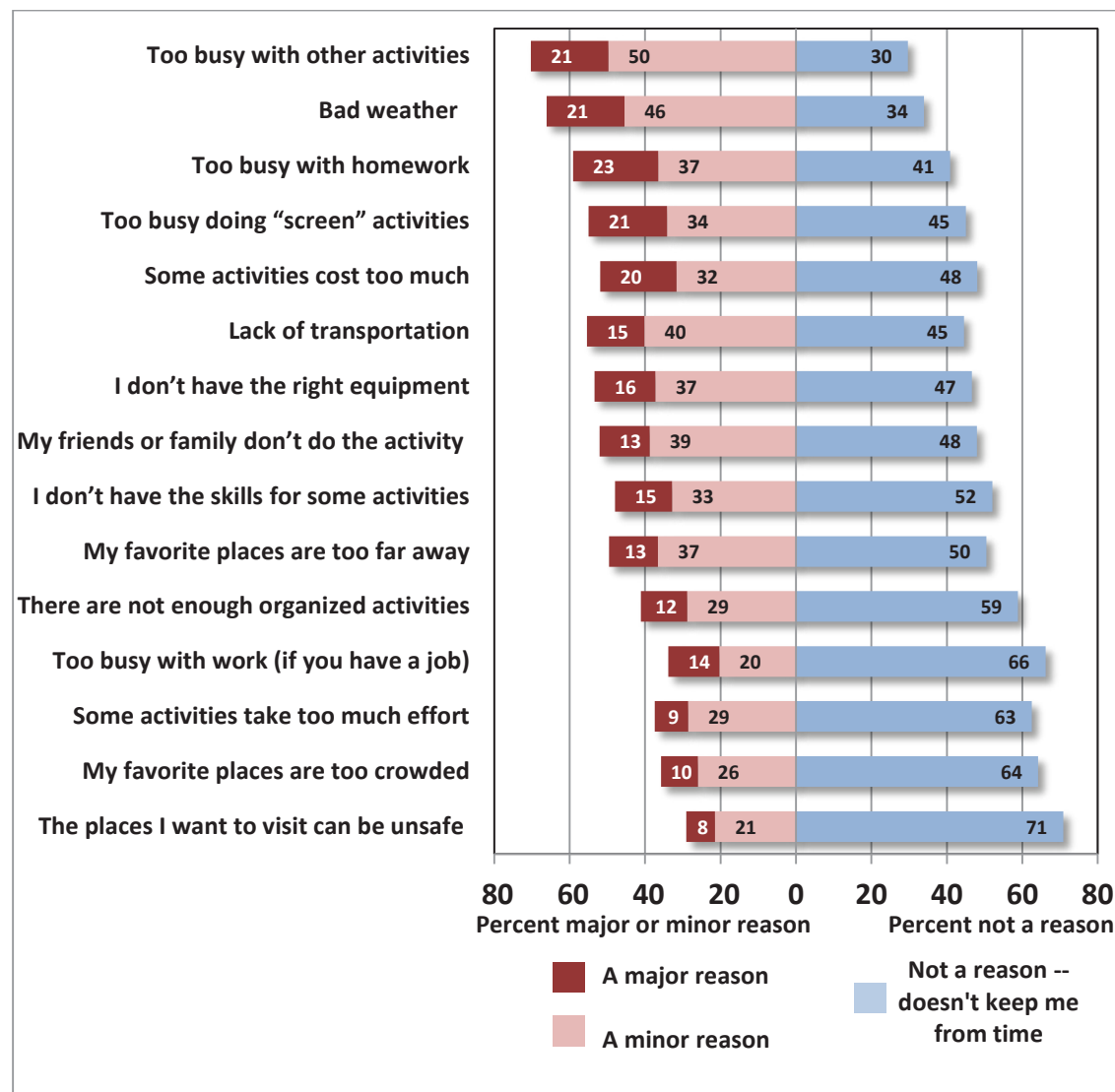


Figure 6. Percent reporting different reasons may cause them to spend less time outdoors.

Park or other protected area visitation

A final section of the survey asked respondents whether they had visited different types of parks in the past two years (they could check all that apply, so totals can exceed 100). Response options are given below; results are provided in Table 8.

- Local park in your community
- State or regional park in Alaska
- National Park in Alaska
- National forest, wildlife refuge, or other similar recreation area in Alaska
- National park, forest, wildlife refuge, or other similar recreation area in another part of the country

Table 8. Percent who report visiting different parks or other protected areas.

Response	Percent all	Percent males	Percent females	Percent remote towns	Percent small towns	Percent large cities
Local park	67	66	69	41	73	75
State or regional park	28	33	28	18	34	25
National Park in AK	24	30	24	15	29	30
Other protected area in AK	27	30	28	19	34	18
Protected area in Lower 48	22	21	27	18	26	18

- There is considerably higher local park use (about two-thirds report going to a park) than regional or national park use (about a quarter).
- There were few substantive differences between males and females for reported park use.

- There were considerable differences between remote communities and those from more populated parts of the state. Without connections to the highway system, less than 20% in remote communities have visited state/regional, national parks, or other protected areas in Alaska, nor protected areas Outside. They were also less likely to visit local parks – possibly because there may not be such areas identified. However, it should be noted that open space for recreation is relatively abundant in these specific remote communities (Dillingham, Metlakatla, Kotzebue, and St. Michael).

Respondents were asked to name their favorite park or outdoor recreation area in Alaska. Verbatim answers are given below (with most frequent entries first, alphabetical thereafter).

- Denali National Park (11)
- Don't have a favorite (11)
- Soldotna Creek Park (6)
- Unspecified beach (5)
- Basketball court (5)
- Rainbow Park (4)
- Kenai beach (3)
- Football field (3)
- Kenai River (3)
- Cope Park (3)

Verbatim answers continued from previous page:

A park by my house in Anchorage
 Alcan
 Aleknagik School Park (2)
 Alyeska Ski Resort
 Anchorage Museum
 Any of them are beautiful
 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Gates of the Arctic NP
 Baseball field (2)
 Beaver Creek Park in Soldotna
 Beluga Lake
 Bird Point (2)
 Bishops Beach (2)
 Chugach National Forest
 Chugach State Park
 Cooper Landing
 Flat Top Mountain, Chugach Park
 Football field
 Glacier in Juneau
 Golf Course
 Grewink Glacier, Kachemak SP
 Hidden Lake (2)
 Hornaday Park (3)
 I don't know like everywhere is fun, beautiful, and very outdoorsy.
 Katmai NP
 Kenai soccer fields
 Kenai Wildlife Refuge (2)
 Kincaid Park, Anchorage
 Lions Park, Anchorage, Alaska
 Mendenhall Glacier
 Moose Meadows
 Municipal park
 My backyard.

Dillingham doesn't have one.
 Old Logging Roads
 Open Gym
 Open Gym
 Park in My Neighborhood
 Pioneer Park in Fairbanks, Alaska
 Pioneer Park in Metlakatla
 Rec Center in Ketchikan
 Rock Pile
 Sand Dollar Beach
 Sea Life Center
 Sears Elementary School Park
 Settlers Cove
 Skate Park
 Skater's Lake Trail
 Skyline
 Soccer Fields
 Sport Lake
 Swanson Lake
 Talkeetna
 Nikiski Beach
 The one by my grandma's house in Anchorage
 The one with a slide
 The runway
 Soldotna Community Park
 Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (2)
 Tongass National Forest
 Totem Park
 Twin Lakes (2)
 Valley of the Moon in Anchorage, Alaska
 Winchester Park



SCORP

Fishing at Willow Creek



SCRP

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC COMMENTS

First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Gail	Davidson	Fairbanks		An interesting read, though I am discouraged by the lack of respondents to the professional manager survey. The youth survey misses any participation from the Interior, which could differ from that of other parts of the state. My main concern is the repeated emphasis on the availability of outdoor recreation for only a few months of the year. I don't believe this to be true; a greater emphasis should be placed in the document on making more opportunities available in winter. In my experience, funding can be denied to programs that are available for only a short time--money is better spent where it will be used for a greater portion of the year.	Discouraging lack of response to surveys. Need to make more opportunities available for winter activities.	We would have liked a larger response also. Winter recreation is equally represented by the survey questions, however, and highlighted in the SCORP cover photo. Opportunities may increase as people place greater value on benefits of outdoor activity for our physical and mental well-being, especially during Alaska's long winter months.
First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Jeff	Budd	Sitka	Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board	I sure liked the photos. It was a bit academic but I suppose it has to be that way. It is obvious that a lot of time and thought and work went into it. I liked the intro and the reminder of how diverse and big Alaska is and the importance that we all need to get out doors. Why are section 3 and 4 almost like 7 and 8 -- although 7 and 8 have more detail? Pages 52, 53 and 54 - I wonder on the actual grant they are asked to cite where in SCORP they found the info - page number and then on subjects like 4 and 5 how they quantified those numbers.	Why are Section 3 and 4 similar to Section 7 and 8? Do grant applicants have to cite SCORP pages or quantify numbers?	Sections 3 and 4 synopses the full report shown in Appendix A and B. Applicants do not need to cite SCORP pages. They may use their own local knowledge or data for their project proposals.

First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Paul	Clark	Anchorage	NPS--RTCA Program	<p>1. pg. 3 - recommend different picture since the Byers Lake bridge isn't there anymore! 2. Why is there so much focus on describing wetlands? Is this a SCORP focus/requirement? Or is this a priority for land acquisition through LWCF? An explanation is needed for why this information is the focus of the "Overview of the Great Land" section. 3. A table showing responses by agency and geographic location would be helpful (add text to map on pg 16) 4. Were surveyed recreation professionals from local, state, and federal, or just state? Please add clarification. 5. Pg 26 - note that for trails and facilities on federal public lands, the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) applies, not ADA. 6. Why does the youth survey section not use tables and graphics like the main survey results section does? I recommend displaying the data consistently throughout the document, unless there are reasons this is not possible or practical. 7. The "Goals" section just refers to DPOR rather than all public lands. Is this because the SCORP can only speak to goals on state lands, or could these goals also be coordinated with local and federal land managers? 8. Pg 38 - Since "lack of knowledge about where to go" is a top barrier to people using outdoor recreation sites, add a strategy under Goal 1 about improving information about recreation opportunities, like "Improve information, and public access to information, about existing recreation sites and opportunities throughout the state." 9. Pg 38 - Change strategy A under Goal 2 to be "Build or refurbish infrastructure using sustainable DESIGN and materials." 10. Pg 38 - Add a Strategy C to Goal 2 about volunteers - "Recruit, train, and retain more volunteers to increase capacity for trail and facility maintenance." 11. Pg 38 - Change Goal 3 to read "Ensure Future Funding AND SUPPORT for Outdoor Recreation". Also, change Strategy C to read "Supporting existing and develop new partnerships with grassroots groups, non-profit, and for-profit organizations to build community support and leverage appropriated funding." I think "Friends" groups, especially developing new groups, would be the least effective way to meet state goals. Definitely worth cultivating successful existing Friends groups, though. Lots of comments here, and my interests are more focused on the Goals section. Give me a call if you would like to discuss in more detail, and I'd also be happy to help facilitate discussions with other land managers if that would be beneficial. Thank you for your work on this important document! I hope the lack of participation from recreation professionals doesn't impact the competitiveness of Alaska's projects for nationally-competed funding (like the ORLP grants).</p>	See Full Comment.	<p>1. A new Byers Lake bridge is being put in soon, so the picture will remain. 2. Discussion of wetlands is a federal requirement. Although the National Park Service (NPS) acknowledges that it is redundant and obsolete, since the US Fish & Wildlife Service is responsible for wetlands information, Congress has not yet removed the requirement to include it in the SCORP. 3. A table may be added to page 16, as suggested. 4. Recreation professionals from federal, state, and local agencies (public, private, for-profit, and non-profit) were surveyed. We will clarify that in Chapter 3, page 15. 5. Page 26 will be changed to reflect the Architectural Barriers Act rather than the ADA. 6. Suggestion for tables or graphics noted. 7. The Goals are for the Division. Other entities may elect to adopt different goals or strategies. 8. Language will be added to Goal 1, Strategy B, page 41 addressing the need to improve information about recreational opportunities and access to public rec areas. 9. Suggestion incorporated. 10. Suggestion noted. 11. Suggestion added.</p>

First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Eric	Troyer	Fairbanks		<p>Generally, I am very impressed by this report. It seems well researched and thorough. In particular, I want to comment on "Part 5: Looking to the Future." My comments are below. GOAL 1: Increase Participation in Outdoor Recreation Strategy A: Introduce new users to our parks and green spaces My comment: Themed programs are a good way to encourage people to get outside. Also, DPOR should partner with already existing local social groups, such as hiking, biking, running and skiing clubs to encourage more use of state parks. Perhaps one person at each state park unit or region could be designated as a liaison to local groups. That liaison could regularly check in with groups to find out if there is anything the DPOR can do to make use of the facilities easier or to suggest activities based on the group's interests. Simply maintaining contact might increase the possibility of the group doing things at state park facilities. For example, I have started to lead occasional ski tours for the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. Just writing this makes me think I should lead one in the Chena River State Recreation Area this coming winter. Strategy B: Improve and increase accessibility to outdoor recreation facilities and areas My comment: Increasing access to outdoor facilities is important. But I think increasing the number of access points should be emphasized over increasing the size of current access points (such as parking lots). Spreading out use will increase access while helping to retain important aspects of the outdoor experience, such as quiet and wildlife viewing. Strategy C: Coordinate with health care providers for "Prescriptions to Parks" My comment: I like this because these types of programs have been successful elsewhere. Social groups seem to increase outdoor recreation for those who are not already avid outdoor recreationalists, so including information on local outdoor groups with the prescriptions would probably help increase success. General comment: I liked the other goals and strategies presented in this section, but don't have further comment except for one aspect. I found this line, on page 49, interesting: "Recreation professionals who responded to the survey also stated that there is a lack of knowledge about where to go and cited a need for better orientation." This is interesting and problematic. There is a lot of information out there on "where to go" but it is buried in a deluge of information that is the Internet. How do you get the right information to the right people? Maybe you should encourage the Pokemon GO people to hide more of their animals in Alaska state parks!</p>	<p>Focus on Goals in Part 5 of SCORP. Strengthen partnerships/liaison with local groups. Suggest increasing number of access points rather than increasing size of current points, such as parking lots. Capitalize on themed programs or trends such as encouraging Pokeman GO in the parks!</p>	<p>Good suggestions! We incorporated the idea of additional access points, rather than just expanding existing ones under Goal 1. The Division will strive to strengthen partnerships with local groups. We may also try to incorporate more themed activities and trends to increase people's enjoyment of and participation in the outdoors.</p>

First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Ben	Sullender	Anchorage		<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2016-2021. My comments mainly concern funding opportunities for avalanche information centers that provide essential assessments, forecasts, and reports that literally make the difference between life and death. Outdoor recreation is, without a doubt, one of the most important factors for living in Alaska, and the boundless outdoors opportunities are the primary reason I decided to make my home in Alaska. From talking with newer transplants, I know this is a common sentiment. The challenge is when our selected recreational activities carry a higher-than-usual degree of risk. As an avid backcountry skier, I love the unparalleled access to ski-able mountains in South-central Alaska. The plow teams keep Turnagain Pass open to cars throughout heavy snowstorms, and the excellent team at Hatcher Pass make sure that access is available whenever possible. (Please keep funding the winter plow and road-maintenance teams!) However, with this access comes greater exposure to danger. Nationwide, backcountry skiing is exploding in popularity, bringing more people into the mountains and introducing less experienced backcountry users into dangerous conditions. Within Alaska, the Hatcher Pass Avalanche Center and the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Information Center are the two best opportunities we have to reduce exposure to dangerous conditions and spread awareness. As we've seen from the six fatalities in Alaska this past season, the danger is real and the need for information is paramount. Although backcountry skiers, snowboarders, and snowmachiners make up a relatively small percentage of total winter recreation according to the SCORP statistics, these groups run a substantial risk. SCORP is a golden opportunity to demonstrate Alaska's commitment to safety in winter recreation, and the most pragmatic way to do this is by opening funding opportunities to mostly volunteer-run, financially insecure avalanche information centers. SCORP can ensure that winter backcountry users have access to the information they need to make life-or-death decisions. I am happy to follow up with further information, and thank you again for the opportunity to comment.</p>	<p>Continue funding access to winter outdoor activities. Promote winter outdoor safety by funding avalanche info centers.</p>	<p>Winter outdoor safety is a huge concern, and the Division actively promotes safety by issuing winter trail, back country, and avalanche condition reports regularly throughout the season. Funding avalanche information centers, though, is problematic since indoor facilities or enclosed structures are rarely eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. (The SCORP is a guiding document for decisions on LWCF grants.) And, cost of maintenance or operation of an avalanche center would be entirely ineligible for LWCF or many other sources of grant funding. Perhaps avalanche and other outdoor winter safety information may be disseminated through partnerships with various other agencies.</p>

First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Brian	Okonek	Anchorage	Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition	<p>Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition (AQRC) is a statewide, non-profit organization which believes natural sounds and natural quiet are resources of our public lands which deserve the same types of protection as other natural resources such as clean air and clean water. Our mission is to maintain and restore natural sounds and natural quiet through advocacy and education for the benefit of people and wildlife. We believe outdoor recreationists on our public lands are entitled to experience these lands without the sounds of motorized recreation. To that end we seek to work with land managers engaged in land use planning and permitting to provide a fair and equitable share of separate trails and areas for the non-motorized user of our public lands. It is unfortunate that there was not a wider participation in your two surveys, to outdoor recreation professionals and to Alaska's youth, in order to establish the state's priorities for the next five years. However, despite the low response there appears to be a close consistency in what the three regions consider to be the important management and facility needs: maintenance of existing facilities; trail improvements and restrooms, along with increasing the number of ADA-compliant trails and facilities. AQRC is aware that a huge backlog of deferred maintenance exists and that the amount of funding available over the next five years from the Land and Water Conservation Fund is inadequate to fully meet those costs. That being the case, we believe the lack of a more definitive survey response is not a problem. We note that respondents from the rural part of the state identified user conflict as the third most important barrier to increasing participation in outdoor recreation. AQRC fully supports the solution proposed: to provide separate trail and spaces and agrees that such action would also improve safety. AQRC fully supports the three goals proposed: increase participation in outdoor recreation; maintain sustainable outdoor recreational infrastructure and ensure future funding for outdoor recreation and their accompanying strategies. However, we believe the strategy to implement the third goal (future funding) needs to expand beyond just educating State Legislators on the economic benefits of funding outdoor recreation. There is nothing in this draft document that mentions or considers the effect, both positive and negative, summer tourism usage has on the maintenance issues affecting these public facilities. We suggest that tourism could be source of sustainable funding and that a strategy should be developed to fully explore whether and how tourism could be a potential funding source; not just, as we assume, a drain on DPOR resources.</p>	Explore summer tourism and usage as a potential source of funding. Provide equitable funding for non-motorized use of public lands.	The Division has connected with the Alaska Travel Industry in some ways, and looks to strengthen that partnership. The Division seeks to balance support for a variety of public outdoor recreation users, and priorities listed in the SCORP serve as a guide.

			Continued from above.	We fully support the idea that it is important to engage youth in outdoor recreation now to ensure support for such activities and facilities in the future. While we agree that the survey cannot be relied upon as an accurate representation of Alaska's youth needs and desires, we do think some worrying trends were indicated. Specifically we note that the youth said they spend about the right amount of time outdoors and were "too busy" to spend more time outdoors and that the second and third top winter activities were "indoor exercise" and "indoor sports". We suggest that one step that DPOR could do to help insure the continued participation of youth in outdoor recreation would be to sponsor more activities in the parks which focus on their interests. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.	Continued from above.... Engage youth by sponsoring more outdoor activities which focus on their interests.	The Division plans to offer more theme-related activities to engage people in the outdoors.
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First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Cliff	Eames	Copper Center	Copper Country Alliance	<p>Copper Country Alliance is a volunteer grassroots 501(c)(3) organization that addresses conservation issues in the Copper Basin. The majority of our members are Copper Basin residents, and almost all are avid users of Alaska's outdoors. We also care deeply about the health of Alaskans, especially Alaska's youth, and are convinced that time spent outdoors enhances health now and for the future. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the draft Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Responsibility to Areas without Regional or Local Government The Copper River Basin is part of the Unorganized Borough and has no incorporated cities. Thus, there is no local government that could apply for LWCF or RTP funds. There are, however, a school district, tribal governments (some of which may be able to apply for LWCF funds), and non-profits. Many of these, to one degree or another, have outdoors programs. Collectively, staff and a host of volunteers put in thousands of hours to make outdoor activities a success, but funding for supplies, travel, and perhaps even infrastructure are usually needed. The LWCF program is for "...all citizens of the United States of present and future generations...." Therefore, the SCORP should be explicit that LWCF funds will be used by the State to serve areas without local or borough governments. Retention of State Lands for Recreation Providing state land for parks, open spaces, and trails is important to the Copper Basin's future. The Division of Mining, Land, and Water is currently working on a revised Copper River Basin Area Plan. Designating land for disposals (settlement and agriculture) seems to be the main focus of the revision. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation could and should work with the planning team to ensure that each settlement disposal leaves a piece of enclosed or adjacent state land for public recreation. It is important that everyone have a public park, open space, and/or trail within easy walking distance. This, too, should be part of the SCORP.</p>	Use LWCF to serve areas without local or borough governments. Provide equal support for motorized and non-motorized users.	Per federal regulations, LWCF grants can only be issued to entities which have the legal authority to provide outdoor recreation services on public lands. Locally, those entities are most often cities, boroughs or tribes. Even within unincorporated areas, however, the State of Alaska has invested LWCF in many public outdoor recreation areas. The Copper River district, for example, offers public recreation opportunities at Lake Louise, Little Tonsina, Squirrel Creek, Porcupine Creek, Worthington Glacier, and many other State Recreation Sites. Balance: The Division seeks to balance support for a variety of public outdoor recreation users, and priorities listed in the SCORP serve as a guide. Those priorities may shift with future survey responses.

			Continued from above.	<p>More Support for Non-Motorized Recreation The draft SCORP mentions the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor recreation. It is encouraging that the Youth Survey showed so much participation in non-motorized recreation. It is pretty clear that non-motorized recreation promotes better physical fitness than does motorized. (Comparing the appearance of a group of hikers to a group of ATV riders demonstrates this.) Additionally, non-motorized recreation enhances mental and emotional fitness, and better protects ecological values than does motorized recreation. Non-motorized trails are also far easier and cheaper to construct and maintain than motorized trails. For all these reasons, we are perplexed by the State's stronger support for motorized trails than for non-motorized trails in our region. On state lands and state-selected lands in the Tangle Lakes Archeological District, for instance, there are eight designated motorized trails and only one designated non-motorized trail (the Rusty Lake Trail, which needs a re-route due to a flooding by a beaver dam.) Not only that, but the state recently began the expensive and difficult process of linking the Maclaren Summit Trail, which is largely non-motorized and popular with hikers, with the motorized Glacier Lake Trail. This will increase motorized use on the Maclaren Summit Trail and render it less attractive to hikers. It's true that hikers, unlike ATV riders, can legally travel off-trail in the TLAD, but some Alaskans and many Outside visitors are unused to striking off cross country. Even experienced hikers appreciate a trail to get them up through the brush zone. Within the Copper River Basin outside the TLAD, there are no designated non-motorized trails on the 3.3 million acres of state land and state-selected land. Providing some equity between non-motorized and motorized trails should be a strategy in the SCORP. Perhaps you could also help to establish and provide some support for a "Friends of Copper Basin Hiking Trails" organization. Communications We recognize that your funding has been limited and will be even more limited during state government's lean times, but you might find some ways to improve outreach. (We learned of the SCORP comment opportunity second-hand. It seems that it did not appear on the state's online public notices website.) This would be mutually beneficial; it would help build support for the goals in the SCORP, such as ensuring a fair state of future funding for Alaska. Besides the state online public notices website, you can reach out through the local newspaper and radio stations. Thank you again for this opportunity to comment. 1. Lumping the Copper River Basin with Railbelt communities in the Recreation Professionals Survey masks this fact.</p>	Continued from above..... Improve outreach to garner more comments.	<p>Outreach: Although constrained by budget and staffing reductions, DPOR announced its request for and sought public comments in a variety of ways. The Division connected with 105 individuals and news agencies across Alaska through a Media Release (sent to agencies as far flung as the Nome Nugget newspaper to the Valdez Star, and Radio Kenai); notified via e-mail 50 city, borough, and tribal governments, as well as 21 federal and state agencies; reached diverse audiences through organizations such as the Alaska Travel Industry (770 members and a newsletter to 2,200 people) and Alaska Campground Owner's Association with 49 associates; spoke at the Rec Trails Conference and other venues, and followed up in the Rec Trails newsletter (circulation 754). Through social media, the Division also connected directly with 3,136 individuals and groups to spread the invitation for public comment. The announcement and draft SCORP document was available online through both the Department and the Division website for over 45 days, and hard copies were available in various locales. In addition, Division staff used a tag line on each e-mail signature with a link to the SCORP draft and request for comments, thus extending continuous outreach.</p>
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First Name	Last Name	City	Agency	Comment	Synopsis of Comment	State of Alaska Response
Jamie	Dawson	Copper Center	Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment	<p>The Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (or "WISE") is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Kenny Lake, Alaska. WISE provides science and environmental education, resources for learning, support for scientific research, and opportunities to explore the natural wonders of the Copper River Basin. Our organization places a strong emphasis on youth programs, and we primarily utilize human-powered forms of transport such as hiking, canoeing, etc. during these programs. While we appreciate the convenience that motorize travel affords, WISE hopes to see the state support the rehabilitation, development, and designation of trails and areas for non-motorized use in the Copper River Basin and elsewhere in Alaska. A non-motorized recreational experience affords a different sense of accomplishment (one must work much harder to arrive at a destination), offers positive health benefits, and allows for a closer, more in-depth connection to the natural resources around us (travel is slower, and often much quieter). The responses collected and reported in the SCORP make it clear that non-motorized activities are a priority for Alaskans, therefore WISE hopes to see the state manage public lands more for those purposes in the future. Additionally, WISE is based in an unincorporated part of the state. We would like to see a more explicit description of how LWCF monies will be used by the state to serve areas without local or borough governments. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan.</p>	Describe how LWCF is used in unincorporated areas of the state. Provide more support for non-motorized recreation.	<p>Per federal regulations, LWCF grants can only be issued to entities which have the legal authority to provide outdoor recreation services on public lands. Usually those local entities are cities, boroughs or tribes. Entities which are eligible to apply for LWCF grants serve as sponsor of the project in perpetuity, and must agree to maintain (and ensure the site remains) a viable public outdoor recreation unit forever. The Division has, and will continue, to invest LWCF in many public outdoor recreation areas, even in unincorporated regions of Alaska. (See examples listed in the Copper River district above.) Support: The Division receives requests from a variety of public outdoor recreation users and seeks to balance opportunities for the public. Priorities listed in the SCORP help guide these funding decisions.</p>



SCOTT

Hatcher Pass

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Rangers and troopers pose with Safety Bear

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