

## Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)

MINUTES      January 14-16, 2025      9 AM-4:30 PM      IN-PERSON & VIDEO CONFERENCE

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| MEETING CALLED BY: | Department of Natural Resources: Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)  |
| TYPE OF MEETING:   | Grant Applications for Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)-Funding Recommendations and Rankings   |
| FACILITATOR:       | Joel Del Rosario, Administrative Operations Manager   |
| NOTE TAKER:        | Natalya Fomina, DPOR Grants Administrator   |
| TIMERKEEPER:       | All   |
| ATTENDEES:         | Alaska State Parks Staff: Ricky Gease, DPOR Director, Joel Del Rosario, Administrative Operations Manager, Danette Berkovitz, Grants Manager, Natalya Fomina, Grants Administrator, Jean Ayers, Grants Administrator, ORTAB Members: Motorized Trail Representatives: Rod Arno, Noah Lager, Ronald Lurk, Non-Motorized Trail Representatives: Christy Gentemann, Libby Kugel (ORTAB Chair), Mike Sirofchuck, Diversified Trail Representatives: Jeff Budd, Andrew Carmichael. |

### 1/14/2025 – Day 1

**9:00 AM.** Meeting was called to order by Grants Administrator, Natalya Fomina. Staff, ORTAB members, and members of the public introduced themselves. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Attendees introduced themselves and provided opening comments. Mr. Del Rosario reviewed the meeting protocols and guidelines. Director Gease explained the week's agenda.

No public comments were made. Leading to Chair Kugel to close public comment period.

**Agenda Topic:** Avalanche Safety Mapping for Chugach State Park, Hatcher Pass Recreation Area, and part of the Chugach National Forest (RTP Request: \$20,070.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | John Sykes, who works for the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center based out of Girdwood, Alaska and is also an avalanche researcher for Frederick University in Burnaby, British Columbia provided summary of project proposal. The proposed project is an avalanche safety mapping for Chugach State Park, the Hatcher Pass Recreation Area and an area of the Chugach National Forest around Suburban De Vos Lake. These areas were selected because they have high use, and the intention of the project is to use GIS and remote sensing tools that Mr. Sykes developed as part of research to create online maps so that users of the backcountry can understand better where avalanche start zones and run-out zones are and make more informed risk management decisions around avalanche terrain in wintertime. The project was submitted through a non-profit group of the Avalanche Center, the Friends of the Chugach Avalanche Center, which has supported Avalanche Center since it started. The map will be located on the website of the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center as well as the Hatcher Pass Avalanche Center. It will be available to all users, motorized or non-motorized. The goal is to simplify avalanche training. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked the ORTAB members if they had any questions, Mr. Arno asked if the map would have information about current weather conditions. Mr. Sykes responded saying that it would be a static map. Meaning that it would only represent the potential of the terrain to have an avalanche hazard. It would be made to only be a complementary tool for avalanche forecasts. Not something to be used by itself. It estimates avalanche start zones and run outs. When other members were asked if they had any other questions or comments most stated that the project to be a great idea. There were no additional questions or comments.   |

**Agenda topic:** Wayfinding Signage in the UMED district (RTP Request: \$60,073.77)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | Chair Kugel requested Michelle LeBeau with the Anchorage Park Foundation to discuss her project. Ms. LeBeau is requesting funds for wayfinding signage in the UMED area, the medical and university district within Anchorage. This project is part of a much larger effort to make wayfinding and connectivity with that particular area in Anchorage, due to its highly congested traffic issues. There are also a lot of pedestrian and bicycle use in the area. It has become a problem because of the campuses of the universities and medical centers that are all in high use in this area. This project is an outcome of a traffic study that was done in 2023 by Anchorage Municipal Traffic (AMATS). They did a lot of work talking with stakeholders and residents to try and come up with some solutions to this problem. The congestion and difficulties navigating through this area has been a problem for the community for a long time, especially for pedestrians and bike safety. The study pointed out several ways this can be improved and one of the straightforward advantages from the study was to add wayfinding throughout the UMED area that would help connect students, visitors, professionals in that area, move on the existing trails and sidewalks through the district and get to the Anchorage trail system that is surrounding that area. The project is addressing the need found from the study to install 25 wayfinding signs within the UMED area that would be helpful in navigating through the area. As well as doing a lot of public outreaches around the new findings, the wayfinding, as well as helping students and others be aware of what is the safest route to get to and through the UMED district and to the adjacent trails that go around the UMED area. It's something that would really leverage work that's already been done and have an immediate community impact in terms of being able to address a longstanding issue in that area that's been recognized by the community councils and a lot of the different stakeholders. |
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| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any questions or comments from the ORTAB members. Mr. Sirofchuck commented that he has personal experience within the area trying to navigate around it and he thinks it is an excellent project. Mr. Arno asked if there were any new trails being created. Ms. LeBeau responded with “no”. No other comments or questions. |
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**Agenda topic: 35-Mile ORV Riding Park, Phase II (RTP Request: \$299,270.00)**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for Juneau’s Parks and Recreation Director, George Schaaf to provide a synopsis of the project. Mr. Schaaf starts off by giving background on the project, saying that this is the second time the City and Borough of Juneau has applied for the RTP grant back in 2022. He thanks the ORTAB team for granting the original funds. Mr. Schaaf was excited by what had been done with that original project and listed off what had already been done with that grant. He then talked about why a second grant is needed, to help his community to solve a longstanding need for off-road recreation. Overall, they have constructed about 22,000 linear feet of trail and are hoping to complete another 10,000 linear feet, about 2 miles of trail with the grant money and expect the project to end sometime in 2025 or 2026.   |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked the board members if they had any questions or comments. Mr. Lurk stated that he didn’t have a question but wanted to say that he thought this was a fantastic project because in larger cities off-road recreation is not a priority, though it is needed/wanted. Ms. Gentemann and Mr. Sirofchuck agreed with Mr. Arno about the project. Mr. Budd asked if the people who were going to be using this area would be paying for it anything. Mr. Schaaf said while there hasn’t been a lot of direct financial fundraising, the Juneau Off-Road Association has been able to tap into a lot of the contracting community here in Juneau. Many skilled equipment operators, who are, in some cases, bringing their own heavy equipment to the job site, helping save money on the project through in-kind donations and volunteer time. Mr. Arno asked what the total area for the park was, and when both north and south loops are completed, what will the total mileage be. In addition, Mr. Arno asked if this area would just be for ATVs only or if non-motorized users will be able to access the trails as well. Mr. Schaaf responded by saying that these trails will be only dedicated to off-road motorized recreation vehicles. Adding that the site overall is about 500 acres, but not all of it will be usable due to Juneau’s really challenging terrain. Only between 300 and 400 acres will be available for the site. And, about 22,000 linear feet of trail is what is looking to be built for the project. Mr. Lager stated it is a great project. No other question or comments were shared. |

**Agenda topic: Petersville Road Groundbreaking, Phase II (RTP Request: \$300,000.00)**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative, Michele Stevens, for Petersville Road Groundbreaking, Phase 2 to start their introduction to their project proposal. A video was played about the project. The video was silent.   |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any questions or comments. Ms. Gentemann asked if, based on the application, the Rasmussen Foundation might provide a community support grant. Ms. Stevens responded by saying they are a last option, and they wouldn’t know if it would come through until all their other options had been explored. Mr. Sirofchuck stated he appreciated the video and asked how many SAR missions do they usually do during winter. Ms. Stevens said that they used it last year probably 3 times. It gets used a lot when the helos can’t come in and rescue sled isn’t the proper equipment to use. Throughout the whole season she can recall anywhere between 1 to 10 times a year. And it’s usually during extreme weather conditions. Mr. Sirofchuck then asked if there would be an extra room in the proposed 2-bay garage for other things like snow machines. Ms. Stevens stated that, yes, they plan on having the second bay to house vehicles as well as being able to bring things into the bay to get worked on or in the case of an ambulance to have a warm place where transitions can be made. They want at least one vehicle to always be warm, just in case of anything. Mr. Sirofchuck raised his score to 89. Mr. Budd then asked to clarify if they had received any grants from Rasmussen and Ms. Stevens explained that they did not receive it because Rasmussen is usually the final possibility. Mr. Arno asked if there would be possible use in the spring and fall for this building. Ms. Stevens replied, saying yes, they get called out for hunters and riders and the State Troopers can use it and it will be used all year round. No other questions or comments came up. |

**Agenda topic: Chugach National Forest Trail Brushing (RTP Request: \$158,679.96)**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested William Brennan to talk about his proposed project. Mr. Brennan started by informing ORTAB that he has been working with the forest service for about 15 years now and they have a network of almost 600 miles of trail and that large number of trails has consistently been the hardest maintenance challenge for them. Alaska’s brush grows thick, especially in South Central Alaska and while they would like to clear the trails every 3-5 years, though it’s usually closer to 5 due to their staff size and that might fluctuate from year to year. And the trail brushing is also the most consistent public comment received over the years. To tackle this, the grant is seeking to add more people to the trail crew by hiring the Student Conservation Association (SEA). They would focus on brushing some targeted trails in all three districts. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Both Ms. Kugel and Mr. Sirofchuck thought it was a great project. Mr. Arno asked why they applied for their grant under diverse instead of motorized. Mr. Brennan said it was due to the fact that there are many different ways people go through these trails, and they are not all motorized, in fact in the summer they can’t be motorized. Chair Kugel then explained that diverse doesn’t mean motorized or no-motorized, it describes different types of ways people go through the trail, such as bike, ATVs, walking, snowmachines, etc. Mr. Lurk and Ms. Gentemann agreed with it being a great project. No other questions or comments were added.   |

**Agenda topic:** Isberg Recreation Area North-South Connector Trail, Phase I (RTP Request: \$198,413.55)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative from Fairbanks North Star Borough to discuss their proposed project. Andrea Jacobs, Trails Coordinator from the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department, gave a synopsis, along with a few slides. Isberg is a 420-acre facility managed by the Department of Recreation. The site is located just outside the city of Fairbanks. Currently it is a popular location for public use. The plan is to add improvements to the area by building a north to south connector trail, creating a 3-mile year-round, multi-use, motorized loop. A rudimentary access point would be created off Cripple Creek Road to facilitate construction efficiency. Construction will require clearing vegetation along the corridor, placing a hardened gravel surface, and installing drainage features, bridges, and/or access management structures (gates, etc.) where necessary. The route already sees motorized use in the summer, but the ground is degrading, and this project would fix that. It is one of the most accessible parks allowing the use of motorized vehicles and they would like to complete this loop to give the community a quality place to recreate in the borough. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Sirofchuck had no questions but said he really liked the project. Mr. Budd said that after doing some quick math, it seemed like it would be about 1000+ dollars per foot and that just seems like a lot of money. Mr. Arno thought it was a well worth project, even with the cost because of the amount of people that could benefit from it. Mr. Lurk had no questions but thought it was a good project. Ms. Gentemann thought it was also a good project and had a question about how the rudimentary trailhead would be created and how the parking would be handled. Ms. Jacobs went back to her slides to explain at this moment there were still some questions as to how the construction would be done. Chair Kugel had no questions and thought it was a good application. No other questions or comments were voiced.  |

**Agenda topic:** Shoup Bay Trail, Phase 4 (RTP Request: \$129,532.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative from the Valdez Adventure Alliance to speak. Lanette Oliver, Executive Director of the Valdez Adventure Alliance, has been working on Shoup Bay Trail since 2019 with the help of prior RTP grants, along with several other financial supporters. This is Phase 4, and they are trying to get this trail finished because they're being asked to work on a local historical trail. There's been several delays due to not having enough staffing, as well as a big rockslide the previous year that took out a lot of the work that had been done. Phase 4 would partly be resurfacing in areas that had been used during the rest of the construction, other things like new benches and other construction. A Phase 5 will need to happen, but Ms. Oliver believes the Rasmussen Foundation will help with that. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Budd asked about their need for bush flights in the budget. Ms. Oliver responded by saying they need to take a ferry to get to the far end of the project. She couldn't understand the question, so Mr. Budd withdrew his question. Mr. Arno asked about the breakdown of use between local use and if it increases in the summer with tourist use. Ms. Oliver said huge amounts of local use, the visitors do use it, but it's the local who use it the most. Ms. Gentemann increased her score to 95. Mr. Sirofchuck thought it was a really good project because there really aren't any other trails in that area. There were no further questions or comments.   |

**Agenda topic:** Jim Lake Portage Trail (RTP Request: \$131,451.31)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel moved on to the Jim Lake Portage Trail project. Travis Jensen is the Knik River Public Use Land Manager. The area is about 15 miles SE from Palmer, in between Anchorage and Palmer. It averages about 100,000 user visits a year, with about 10% of those users located at Jim Lake. This project is a portage on the south side of Jim Lake that would reinforce and armor the portage as users access Jim Lake. In 2018 they reinforced and rebuilt Maud Road and Maud Road extension to bring it up to acceptable standards. This has increased the use of this area. This project would improve the existing 40-60ft. long Jim Lake portage trail which provides access to Jim Lake and the wetlands system and adjoining lakes. Improvements would include removing the current system of PVC pipe rollers placed directly on bare ground and establishing a wood and metal walking surface held above ground by piers next to a roller carriage to enable users to portage their watercraft without disrupting the ground itself. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Ms. Gentemann asked the reason why the piers and posts are noted to be done in the winter of 2025. Mr. Jensen responded so it could enable access to the helical piers system. Weather allowing the frame would also be done in the winter, but it might have to be done in the spring/summer, but the heavy machinery would have to be done in winter. Most ORTAB members thought it was a good project and there were no further questions or comments.   |

**Lunch Break**

**Agenda topic:** RTP Applications Overall Ranking and Recommendations to Meet FHWA 40/30/30 Percent Target

Director Gease began wrapping up the meeting, stating that there was roughly \$300,000 for motorized, \$400,000 for diversified and \$300,000 for non-motorized and that all categories would be looked at in terms of their scores and try to get the most out of each category. Ms. Fomina also talked about a very competitive year for RTP grants. Also mentioning discussion with applicant for Petersville Groundbreaking project, pros and cons of staging the project. However, that would mean the entire application would have to change and without precedent in the past, this option

was not considered at the end. Director Gease then continued to wrap-up the meeting by discussing what had been done in the past and what the ORTAB members should start thinking about moving forward, especially how outside funding can be found and used. Non-motorized project proposal would be looked at starting the next day at around 9am.

### Meeting Adjourned for the day at 12:46 PM

#### 1/15/2025 – Day 2

**9:10 AM.** The meeting was called to order by Grants Administrator, Natalya Fomina. The meeting began with Director Gease announcing that the final day 1/16/2025 would begin at 11am. Two ORTAB members were not in attendance, but the decision was made to continue and inform them when they arrive. Chair Kugel explained the meeting guidelines. No new business was discussed. The meeting for the RTP project proposals of non-motorized then started.

#### Agenda topic: Bridge Replacement on Nordic 5K Loop (RTP Request: \$200,000.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative from Girdwood Nordic Ski Club, Deb Essex, President of the Girdwood Nordic Ski Club for the last 16 years. Ms. Essex explained the project proposal, it will replace log stringer bridges on the Nordic 5K loop with culverts, which had been installed 2009/2010. Due to the immense watershed in Girdwood, these 4 log bridges have worn down faster than originally thought, causing a need to replace them. One bridge has been replaced with steel and the proposed project is asking for a grant to replace these bridges. The most western bridge will be the first replaced. The preliminary research and surveying has already been done.   |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Lager didn't have any questions but thought it was a lot of funding for a corrugated crossing. Ms. Gentemann had no comments or questions and said it was a well thought out proposal. Mr. Lurk asked if this proposal was for one bridge and Ms. Essex responded with a "yes". Mr. Lurk liked the project and had no further questions or comments. Chair Kugel had no questions or comments but appreciated the pictures and drawings. Mr. Sirofchuck said it was a good proposal, though it was a little high in cost, but thought many people would benefit from it. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were no further questions or comments. |

#### Agenda topic: Cottonwood Eastland Multi-use Trail System (RTP Request: \$200,000.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative from the Homer Cycling Club, Cooper (not last name given) was in attendance online. Their proposal is for the Cottonwood Eastland Multi-use Trail System for hiking and mountain biking, an 11.5-mile trail cover Homer and lower Kenai. There are almost no hiking or mountain biking trails in Homer, and this would be a great advantage for the community and the economy. The funds requested would go directly towards building the trail because fundraising has taken care of the planning. It's shovel ready and should be done in three summers. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Lurk and Ms. Gentemann thought that the responses to the public opposition comments were good, as were the photos and drawings, and it was a well-thought-out application. Chair Kugel was also in agreement with the other members saying it was a solid project. Mr. Sirofchuck agreed with Chair Kugel. Mr. Budd and Mr. Lager also thought this was a good project. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were no further questions or comments.  |

#### Agenda topic: Girdwood Mountain Bike Trail (RTP Request: \$168,750.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for Girdwood Mountain Bike Trail to provide a synopsis of the project. Nick Georgelos gives a summary of the proposal. The project would be Phase 2 of the Girdwood Mountain Bike Park, which would add two new trails to the 5K park. The project was started back in 2018 with an RTP grant and since then the community has been greatly utilizing this area, causing the need for more trails. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. All ORTAB members thought it was a good proposal and had no questions. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were no further questions or comments.   |

#### Agenda topic: Iditarod National Historic Trail: Waterfall to Ptarmigan Trail (RTP Request: \$200,000.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for INHT: Waterfall to Ptarmigan Trail to provide a synopsis of the project. Patrick Shannon gave a summary saying it is proposing the design and construction of the Waterfall to Ptarmigan Trail which will build approximately 2.8 miles of new southern trail along the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The trail construction includes two trail bridges, one is over Waterfall Creek and another one is over Ptarmigan Creek. The goal is to get it done by 2026. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. ORTAB members all had no comments except to say it was a good project and application. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were no further questions or comments.  |

**Agenda topic:** Mosquito Cove Trail Repair (RTP Request: \$87,392.80)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative of Mosquito Cove Trail Repair to provide a synopsis of the project. Ben Hughey, Director of Sitka Trail Works, responded and said the proposal was for one of the most used and in need of repair, trails, in the area. It has been hit hard with blow-down recently, destroying big segments of tread. They have been using community volunteer and very-limited part-time crews that they have had, but they would like to do more. The have strong support from the community, as it is a very popular trail both for locals and visitors. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. ORTAB members all found it to be a good project. Mr. Sirofchuck raised score to 88. Mr. Budd added 5 points to his score. There were no further questions or comments.  |

**Agenda topic:** Trail Connecting Seldovia to Tutka Backdoor Trail (RTP Request: \$73,642.78)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative of Trail Connecting Seldovia to Tutka Backdoor Trail to provide a synopsis of the project. Hig (no last name was given) talked about how this proposed connecting trail is one of the hardest to do due to the terrain. They are planning on using a lot of volunteer help to both build and keep the trail maintained. They have a collaboration with the Homer Outdoor Wilderness Leaders, which brings teenagers into the wilderness to do trail building. This will also help build community ownership to help keep the trail going over the long-term. They want the community's involvement in building and maintaining the trail.  |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Sirofchuck really appreciated the local and youth participation in this project and agrees with getting the community involved to keep the trail in good shape over the years. Mr. Budd asked if the project was "shovel-ready"? Mr. Hig answered that it is. Mr. Budd added 5 points to his score. Mr. Carmichael was impressed by the amount of volunteer involvement and thought it was a good project. Mr. Lurk really liked the application and thought they did a nice job. He changed his score to 94. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. Mr. Sirofchuck raised his score to 90. There were no further questions or comments. |

**Agenda topic:** Service Singletrack, Phase II (RTP Request: \$200,000.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for Service Singletrack Phase 2 provide a synopsis of the project. Martin Miller responded, explaining that the project would complete the construction of the remaining three miles of the 5.5-mile Service Singletrack project. The project is between Hilltop Ski area and Service High School. They have completed all permitting and public involvement for this project. Project received very strong public support and there are funds to pay upfront for this grant. They are ready to start construction summer 2025.  |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. ORTAB members overall thought it was a good project, however several people said not everything in the application was filled out, therefore some gave the project a lower score. Mr. Miller said that they had all the information that was missing and asked if those missing parts could be given to the members. Ms. Fomina said that that information could not be added at this point. Some ORTAB members asked Mr. Miller about the areas they had questions about and he answered them. Chair Kugel raised her points by 6 points. Chair Kugel asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were no further questions or comments. |

**Agenda topic:** Jim Lake Overlook Trails (RTP Request: \$123,731.31)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative of the Jim Lake Overlook Trails project proposal to provide a synopsis of the project. Travis Jensen explained that project includes construction of 2,500-2,900ft. of a new non-motorized earth and gravel trail from the existing Jim Lake parking area, or the Rippy Trail parking area if the preferred Jim Lake parking area route is infeasible, to the Jim Lake Overlook. The answer for which trail will be used will not be made until the Mat-Su Borough Trail Crew is able to walk it. The project will also include the reinforcement and repair of the existing 300ft. path that provides direct access from the Maud Road Extension to the Jim Lake Overlook. Repairs would include re-establishment of the original trail and placement of barriers to prohibit motorized users. The overlook will be slightly graded if needed and a small picnic area created. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. No questions were asked by ORTAB members, and no comments were made.  |

**10am – 15-minute break**

**10:15am** – Meeting Reconvened. Chair Kugel announced that there was a glitch in the application form for the STA proposal and that the ORTAB members would be receiving the corrected application for that proposal from Ms. Fomina later that day and that all members should re-look at the application over lunch and adjust their scores, if necessary, after lunch if need be. Chair Kugel asked if there was any business that needed to be talked about before they went back to the applications. No additional comments or questions were made.

**Agenda topic:** Skeetawk Trail, Phase I (RTP Request: \$200,000.00)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for the Skeetawk Trail Phase I to provide a synopsis of the project. Megan Justus, with Skeetawk or Hatcher Pass Xperience, gave the overview. They are a non-profit ski area located in Hatcher Pass with the mission to develop and maintain a regional alpine ski area to promote safe outdoor recreation, education, and healthy lifestyles. They have been open for five seasons in the row and had an explosion of skier visits. Last year they provided services to almost 30,000 visitors. They are currently operating only 30 acres of their 11,000 acre lease area. So, to meet the demand they are looking to expand into Phase I (B) which is what their application is about. Their plan is to design, clear and grade the trail infrastructure for both summer and winter recreation in Skeetawk's terrain. It will provide greater associability to all of Hatcher Pass, which would benefit the community greatly. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. No members had any questions, and they all thought it was a good project overall. There were no further questions or comments.  |

**Agenda topic:** Youth Trail Maintenance Initiative (RTP Request: \$70,427.58)

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | Chair Kugel requested the representative for the Youth Trail Maintenance Initiative to provide a synopsis of the project. Molly Mitchell, the Program Director from HoWL Inc was online. She explained about the proposed project. The Youth Trail Maintenance Initiative aims to help improve local and regional trail conditions, involve youth in trail maintenance as well as the education of youth about recreation management. This project spans over 2 years and includes 9 multi-day expeditions to work on six trails. Five of these trails are in Kachemak Bay State Park and one is in the Kenai Wildlife Refuge. So, youth crews along with HoWL instructors will complete trail maintenance, including brushing and clear existing trail corridors, minor tread improvements within trail corridors, and replacing trail signs. This work will help reduce the burden of work of trail managers for upkeep but also teach youth about the importance of community work toward maintaining recreational spaces. HoWL is also an educational organization and it will also be an opportunity to teach youth about general outdoor skills as well as topics on balancing conservation with recreation in the context of trails management. Past RTP grants awarded to HoWL have shown that youth crews can have a powerful impact. |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | Chair Kugel asked if there were any comments or questions. No ORTAB members had any questions, but all thought it was a good proposal, and it was important to get young people involved. Mr. Sirofchuck raised his score to 93. Mr. Budd changed his score to 94. There were no further questions or comments.  |

Chair Kugel discussed how they were done looking at all the RTP projects and that they would go to lunch, re-look at the application that was re-sent to the ORTAB members and then after lunch they would come back and discuss scores and any changes. Director Gease said that they would re-gather from lunch at 12:30pm. Mr. Del Rosario then informed the ORTAB members as well as the potential grantees present in the room about how there will be a new way of submitting applications, using Submittables to upload instead of sending them to the Grants Administrator. Chair Kugel then thanked the applicants for their work and said everyone did a great job and that it's going to be a very competitive year.

**Lunch Break – 11:30am**

**Meeting Reconvened – 12:30pm**

Chair Kugel began again by asking if the scores should be looked at and ranked. Ms. Fomina asked if anyone else had any score changes. Changed scores were given on the screen. A project proposal score sheet was shown. Director Gease informed everyone that there was about \$2.5 million RTP grant fund asking this year, however, there is only about \$1 million available funds for non-DPOR applicants. With the majority of projects being over \$100,000, several close to \$300,000 only a few projects would be able to be granted an award. Director Gease then talked about how projects could ask for less but still it does not provide a lot of flexibility for many projects to be granted. He then talked about how RTP grant applicants might want to look at other places to get funded, listing off several places. He confirmed that Alaska State Parks would make sure they maximize all of the funding that they received but just want people to recognize that this year, as Chair Kugel had mentioned, this year is going to be highly competitive and everyone should understand looking at other places to get grants and funds is a real possibility and necessity if they want their project to get done. He appreciates everyone who worked with the RTP program and that everyone did a fantastic job and the next thing to do, after everything is ranked and selected projects are awarded, is to figure out how to get more money into the program so that more people can be awarded for their great projects. Director Gease then ends the meeting by reminding people that tomorrow will start at 11am, they will have lunch then discuss any new business, followed by looking at the LWCF grant applicants. Also mentioning the need for people to use Submittables in the next few months so that the new system can be tested.

**Agenda topic:** RTP Applications Overall Ranking and Recommendations to Meet FHWA 40/30/30 Percent Target

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | The recommendation is as follows based on category:<br><b>PROJECT CATEGORY: DIVERSIFIED</b> |
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|   | <p>Chugach National Forest Trail Brushing Score: 83 Rank: 17</p> <p>Isberg Recreation Area North/South Connector Trail, Phase I Score: 89.13 Rank: 7</p> <p>Shop Bay Trail, Phase 4 Score: 89.13 Rank: 8</p> <p>Jim Lake Portage Trail Score: 86.25 Rank: 10</p> <p>PROJECT CATEGORY: MOTORIZED</p> <p>35-Mile ORV Riding Park, Phase II Score: 90.63 Rank: 5</p> <p>Petersville Groundbreaking, Phase II Score: 84.88 Rank: 14</p> <p>PROJECT CATEGORY: NON-MOTORIZED</p> <p>Bridge Replacement on Nordic 5K Loop Score: 83.5 Rank: 16</p> <p>Cottonwood Eastland Multi-use Trail System Score: 91.38 Rank: 3</p> <p>Girdwood Mountain Bike Trail Score: 90 Rank: 6</p> <p>INHT: Waterfall to Ptarmigan Trail Score: 85.38 Rank: 11</p> <p>Mosquito Cove Trail Renovation Score: 92.63 Rank: 2</p> <p>Trail Connecting Seldovia to the Tutka Backdoor Trail Score: 85.38 Rank: 12</p> <p>Service Singletrack, Phase II Score: 85.13 Rank: 13</p> <p>Jim Lake Overlook Trails Score: 84.63 Rank: 15</p> <p>Skeetwak Trail, Phase I Score: 91 Rank: 4</p> <p>Youth Trail Maintenance Initiative Score: 87.25 Rank: 9</p> <p>PROJECT CATEGORY: SAFETY &amp; EDUCATION</p> <p>Automated Avalanche Terrain Mapping, Southcentral AK Score: 92.88 Rank: 1</p> <p>Nature Within Reach: Linking the UMED to Anchorage's Trail System Score: 82.63 Rank: 18</p> <p>Total funding requested: \$2,741,991.00</p> <p>Available to Non-DPOR: \$1,405,688.00</p> |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b>  | No comments or concerns voiced at this time.  |
| <b>ACTION ITEMS</b>   | <b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>   |
| A motion was made to recommend the above projects, as presented with the rankings and classifications, to Alaska State Parks. | <b>Motion:</b> Jeff Budd  |
| Motion approved unanimously   | <b>Second:</b> Mike Sirofchuck  |

### Meeting Adjourned for the day at 12:49PM

### Day 3 – 11am

Meeting was called to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum established with 8 ORTAB members. Director Gease welcomed attendees to the final day of this 3-day RTP and LWCF combined ORTAB meeting. Staff noted there was enough LWCF money available to fund all local requests if ORTAB merited such. Notwithstanding, the ranking of projects was still warranted, as DPOR reports ranking to NPS. The Chair opened the floor for public comments. Hearing none, the Chair called on applicants to make brief, 5-minute presentations on their projects to ORTAB.

**Agenda topic:** Alaska State Parks Remarks, Discussion and Scoring of the 3 (Three) LWCF Project Proposals Shown Below

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p><b>Toghothele Park Reserve</b> (LWCF Request: \$124,725.00)<br/>Chair Kugel requested the representative of Toghothele Park Reserve to provide a synopsis of the project. Josh Verhagen, Mayor, City of Nenana, gave a summary of the proposal. This project includes demolition and removal of the existing deteriorated concrete basketball court. Sitework includes clean gravel/fill, conduit for future lighting, pouring of new concrete basketball court, and final grading around the perimeter.<br/><b>Q&amp;A:</b> ORTAB members appreciated the planned upgrades to this site, noting the City of Nenana had not requested LWCF assistance in many years. City staff conceded that upgrades were very much needed.<br/>(Ranked 2; Score 86)</p> <p><b>Lund Street Tot Lot</b> (LWCF Request: \$125,000.00)<br/>Chair Kugel requested the representative of Lund Street Tot Lot to provide a synopsis of the project. Morgan Barry, Public Works Director from Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB), gave a summary of the proposal. This project entails the following: demolishing the existing 2-5 age playground equipment and replacing it with new and interactive play elements, new swinging elements and a spiral slide; providing a day use shelter and barbecue area; foundations for a future expanded covered playground; accessible parking area and accessible routes to the upper tier area; and new stairs between the two levels of the park. This project will also include constructing a new accessible parking stall along Lund Street, a concrete sidewalk to connect all upper tier elements, and a new concrete staircase to the lower level of the park.<br/><b>Q&amp;A:</b> ORTAB members appreciated the philosophy of “Increase use, decrease vandalism” and concurred with Barry that by upgrading play equipment and accessibility people would frequent the park with greater confidence and comfort.</p> |
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|   | <p>(Ranked 3; Score 84)</p> <p><b>Wil Maamxsga Pts'aan Park, Phase II</b> (LWCF Request: \$124,702.00)<br/>Chair Kugel requested the representative for Wil Maamxsga Pts'ann Park, Phase II to provide a synopsis of the project. Genelle Winter, Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC), gave a summary of the proposal. This project entails installing playground equipment for toddlers and young people to broaden the age range of people enjoying this new park site. A community survey revealed that a playground in the shape of a seiner fishing vessel would be a good fit for this site. MIC will incorporate traditional Alaska Native formline designs on the playground equipment and in a mural to display Metlakatla's history and heritage.<br/><b>Q&amp;A:</b> ORTAB members acknowledged that this was a continuation project and appreciated the strong community support for this and previous Metlakatla projects which often involved youth in developing their sites. Members also expressed appreciation for incorporating formline art in the design elements, and forward-looking plans to welcome both residents and potential tourists to the Southeast coastal community.<br/>(Ranked 1; Score 91)</p> |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b>  | ORTAB members noted the ease with which they now found information in the applications and related evaluation sheets. There were no further questions or comments on any of the projects.   |
| <b>ACTION ITEMS</b>   | <b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>   |
| A motion was made by Mr. Sirofchuck to move all the projects forward as ranked. | <b>Motion:</b> Mike Sirofchuck  |
| Motion approved unanimously   | <b>Second:</b> Noah Lager   |

**Agenda topic:** New Business, Old Business for LWCF.

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>              | <p>Director Gease talked about new funding opportunity with the expansion of the Outdoor Legacy Program. The restrictions that were originally part of the program have been lifted, for Alaska, making it easier for grants to be asked for. Originally, with the old restrictions, because of the size of Alaska, only 1 out of 206 of our census areas applied. The new instructions for ORLAP are that it will be available to Alaska regional corporations, non-profits, village corporations, and tribes. Details are still being worked out whether these projects will be open to the public or just open to the members of the tribes and village and regional corporations. The exciting opportunity about this program is that there is a minimum request of \$300,000 and the maximum request is \$15,000,000. Which could really benefit our communities; however, a match will still need to be provided. It is more of like a catch-up opportunity for Alaska. Anchorage has completed 2 successful ORLAP plans, Chanshtnu Muldoon Park and Russian Jack. They brought in about a \$1.5 Million. And with the restrictions lifted more projects around the State will hopefully be able to be completed. In addition, as mentioned before, the grants team is moving towards Submittables to handle applications in the near future. Therefore, in the next 6 months there will be emails sent to ORTAB members to take a look at different parts of the process to see how, and make sure everything works okay. Feedback will be helpful from all. The next step is to ground truth the location of the trail and parks in Alaska with the new GIS system that is getting set up into place right now. An ORTAB member that would like to be part of that, let us know and we'll keep you in the loop. People are moving away from paper maps and moving to apps and Alaska wants to make sure they are on top of that. Not only having apps but making sure their information is correct. A portion of the funding will be coming from the overhead of both RTP and LWCF.</p> |
| <b>COMMENTS &amp; CONCERNS</b> | <p>Chair Kugel asked if there were any more comments or questions. Mr. Arno shared how impressed he was with the amount of money that both RTP and LWCF were able to get this year. And he appreciated all the work that the grant team has done for these projects. No other ORTAB member had anything else to add, except Chair Kugel did bring back up the idea of going back to a 2-day ORTAB meeting next year. Mr. Sirofchuck agreed with the Chair and brought up the fact that they have an opening on the ORTAB board. Director Gease responded, saying that if anyone knows of someone who might be a good fit for the position that a call will be put out probably in September. And thanked all members for doing a great job.</p>   |

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:53am**