

Indian to Girdwood Bikepath, known locally as the "Bird-to-Gird"  
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION



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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

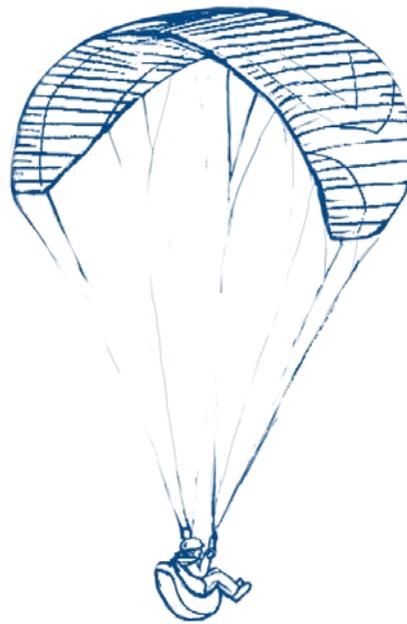
## SECTION A

### SCORP: PURPOSE AND PROCESS

**The Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2023-2027 serves as a comprehensive framework for the next five years of Alaska’s outdoor recreation development and planning. The update comes at a pivotal time for outdoor recreation in Alaska. Experiencing life outdoors is becoming increasingly popular, and resilient strategies are crucial to guide this next phase of growth.**

This document reflects input from leaders in the field of outdoor recreation and presents goals and objectives to enhance life outdoors in Alaska. Alaska’s public agencies, private sector businesses, non-profits, Alaska Native and tribal organizations, and recreation user groups will be able to reference this document as they work together to advance statewide goals.

The SCORP update is an eligibility requirement for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program. The LWCF provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas



and infrastructure. Additionally, the SCORP provides guidance for the project selection process for another federal funding program, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). In each SCORP update, the state should 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.

What makes this SCORP unprecedented is the transformative vision to move beyond simply meeting federal funding requirements. First and foremost, this update aims to redefine “outdoor recreation” in Alaska to include not only typical outdoor pursuits but also the subsistence lifestyle critical to sustaining the physical lifestyle and spiritual culture of Alaska’s diverse peoples. This broadening of scope includes new partnerships, data and analytic tools, and statewide goals. The SCORP presents a new foundation for development, investment, and a generation of benefits for outdoor recreation at multiple scales.

**“If interest and participation in outdoor activities in Alaska are increasing, great! Give the people what they want. Make Alaska the place that promotes and facilitates outdoor activities more than any other place in the world.”**

*– SCORP public survey comment, 2022*



Therapeutic riding program in Ruth Arcand Park in Anchorage  
Photo by Equine Assisted Therapy Alaska

The multiple changes that distinguish this update from previous plans include:

### **AN EXPANDED DEFINITION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION:**

The 2023-2027 update defines outdoor recreation broadly, including everything from playgrounds to boat launches, campgrounds, trails, subsistence use, and more.

### **LOCALLY-DRIVEN AND EXPERT-ADVICE PROCESS:**

A sincere effort has been made to involve as many experts and local voices as possible in the production of this document. To that aim, two processes were established:

- A **Statewide Advisory Group (SWAG)** was formed to identify statewide themes for outdoor recreation. The SWAG included over 20 participants representing diverse areas of expertise related to outdoor recreation in Alaska.
- Seven **subregional working groups** were formed to identify subregional objectives, strategies, and initiatives. Approximately 140 participants took part in the working groups.

### **LWCF OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS REVISIONS:**

One of the emerging issues is the capacity of all eligible communities to participate in the LWCF application process. To address concerns like the relatively narrow definition of outdoor recreation and limiting application requirements, the Open Project Selection Process has been revised.

**INNOVATIVE DATA:** The goals and strategies of the SCORP update incorporate a range of cutting-edge data analysis to spatially display outdoor recreation supply and demand. National and statewide outdoor recreation participation data was also analyzed to research trends in use.

- **Surveys:** A representative sample of Alaskans participated in a public survey that gathered information about topics such as outdoor recreation participation, support for improvements in infrastructure, and investment preferences. A separate land managers survey brought insight from public and private land managers in Alaska. A survey was also distributed to Alaska Native tribes.
- **GIS and anonymized cell phone data:** Outdoor recreation infrastructure has been mapped to create a baseline of the existing supply of facilities and infrastructure that support outdoor activities. Mobile aggregated and anonymized data between 2019 to 2021 shows statewide and regional trends in demand for outdoor recreation.

The resulting SCORP reviews demand and capacity for Alaska outdoor activities, making the case for increased investments in infrastructure for Alaska communities. The SCORP presents strategies to improve the management of outdoor activities through access, capacity building, technology, and stewardship. As has been done in many other states, the SCORP considers the potential to create a centralized office tasked with supporting outdoor life in Alaska. Furthermore, this planning process creates opportunities to improve coordination and enhance partnerships between those who treasure and depend on the Alaska outdoors. These recommendations aim to improve Alaskans' capacity to care for and enjoy Alaska's rich outdoor recreation resources.

Please join in celebrating Alaska's unique outdoor life and heritage and learn more about ways for all Alaskans to lead active, healthy lives while conserving our natural resources.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The revision of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578) as amended.

Work on the Alaska SCORP 2023-2027 began in early 2021 by a team composed of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), and Alaska Trails, a statewide non-profit. This work was supported through organizational funds (RTCA and Alaska Trails) and volunteer efforts (all facilitators and participants). In 2021, DPOR applied for and received a SCORP planning grant through the LWCF program. These funds became available in 2022 to hire four contractors (Alaska Mapping Company, Alaska Trails, Qualtrics, and RRC Associates) to continue the work started in 2021. In addition to covering the cost of production, the SCORP planning grant provides funding for the public, land managers, and tribal surveys, mobile data analysis, and GIS maps to assess outdoor recreation infrastructure supply and demand.



Photo by Betty Siegel

## SECTION B

### Outdoor Recreation in Alaska

**Life outdoors** has been the Alaskan way for millennia, encompassing access to subsistence, trade corridors, supply routes, sports, and recreational activities into Alaska's majestic wilderness. Outdoor recreation includes a wide variety of activities, transportation modes, uses, seasonal variation, and physical ability. Impacts of outdoor recreation ripple through the whole state by strengthening the economy, creating new business opportunities, supporting healthy lifestyles and strong communities.

This chapter highlights the many ways outdoor recreation benefits Alaska residents and visitors of the state.



Hiker atop McHugh Peak in  
the Chugach Mountains  
Photo by Bill Sherwonit

The beauty and vastness of Alaska is indescribable. The landscape is as varied as the lives of those who call Alaska home and the dreams of those who visit. From the waterways to the trails, the treeless alpine to the lush rainforests, the highest mountain peaks to the deepest glacial valley – Alaska’s natural resources create boundless outdoor recreation opportunities, valued by residents and visitors alike.

Outdoor recreation is the backbone of the diverse, unique Alaska way of life and Alaska heritage. For many Alaskans, outdoor recreation transcends hobbies and leisure activities – it is a way of life rooted deep in tradition. Alaska life outdoors fuels the fire in people all over the world to head North for an experience of a lifetime. Outdoor recreation encompasses a variety of uses and activities in our big state. For some, the improvement of subsistence hunting trails is the highest priority. For others, especially with the increasing impact of climate change on traditional travel routes, safer travel options may be important. For others, it may be the development of visitor resources to attract tourists to small communities. As a result, outdoor recreation and what it means looks different across the state. For these reasons, it is especially important to consider a diverse set of priorities for this SCORP to be a comprehensive statewide Alaskan effort.

Alaska is full of amazing places that inspire awe  
and deeper connection to the magic of the natural world.



Caines Head State Recreation Area  
Photo by Kate Ayers

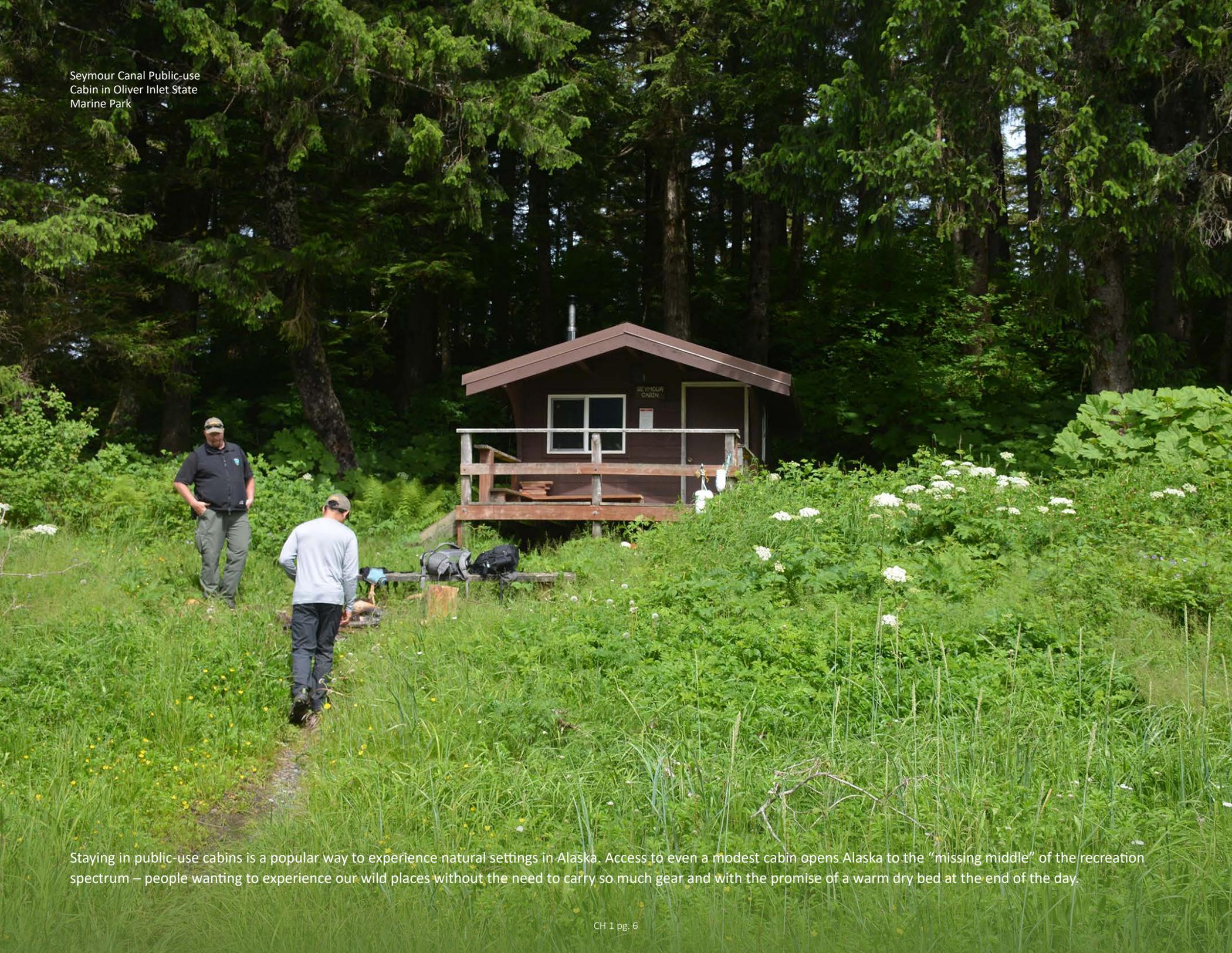
Outdoor Recreation is different  
in different seasons.



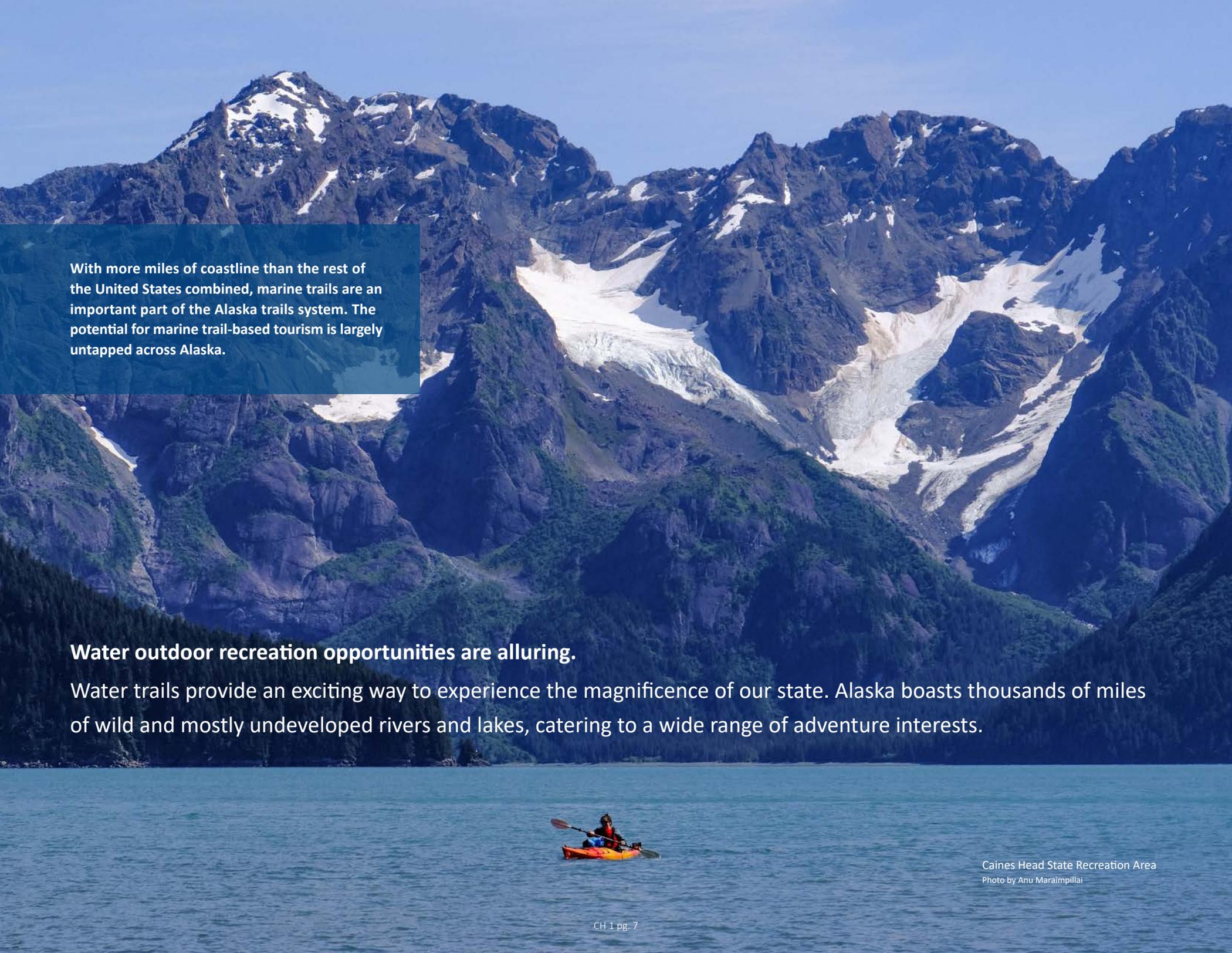
Summer users might roller-ski on paved paths, spend a day at a playground, mountain bike on single track, ride their ATVs on multi-use trails, hunt Dall's sheep, fish at a salmon stream, day-hike a popular route, or go for an extended backcountry trip. Opportunities are endless.

With Alaska's long winter, outdoor recreation is not limited to summer months. Winter provides a unique array of outdoor recreation opportunities including cross-country and downhill skiing, snowmachining, fat-tire biking, snowshoeing, and traditional winter hiking. Other activities include winter camping, ice climbing, ice skating, hunting, trapping, fishing, dog mushing, and backcountry skiing.





Staying in public-use cabins is a popular way to experience natural settings in Alaska. Access to even a modest cabin opens Alaska to the “missing middle” of the recreation spectrum – people wanting to experience our wild places without the need to carry so much gear and with the promise of a warm dry bed at the end of the day.

A wide-angle photograph of a majestic mountain range. In the center, a large, white glacier flows down a steep, rocky slope. The mountains are dark and rugged, with patches of snow and ice. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the sky. A small orange kayak with a person inside is visible on the water. The sky is clear and blue.

With more miles of coastline than the rest of the United States combined, marine trails are an important part of the Alaska trails system. The potential for marine trail-based tourism is largely untapped across Alaska.

**Water outdoor recreation opportunities are alluring.**

Water trails provide an exciting way to experience the magnificence of our state. Alaska boasts thousands of miles of wild and mostly undeveloped rivers and lakes, catering to a wide range of adventure interests.

Caines Head State Recreation Area  
Photo by Anu Maraimpillai

Outdoor Recreation is about access to **Alaska's bounty**.

Trails provide access to what makes Alaska unique – untrammeled nature, remoteness, and abundance of wild foods. Alaska residents and visitors appreciate access provided by trails to fishing, trapping, hunting, berry picking, and wild plant harvesting.

Fishing on the Delta  
Wild and Scenic River  
Photo by Bob Wick, BLM

Rural residents and urban hunters rely on hunting and trapping for their annual meat supply, while recreational hunters enjoy the outdoor opportunities and the thrill of the Alaskan bounty.

Camp participants are working on caribou at Selawik Science-Culture Camp in the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo by USFWS



## Trails provide transportation routes.

Trails are essential to life in rural Alaska communities. Residents of remote Alaska require trails to not only meet their subsistence needs but also as transportation pathways. Remote villagers often rely on trails for everyday living tasks such as dropping off kids at school, commuting to work, going to the post office, or traveling between communities.

Four-wheelers are a common way to travel on trails from remote villages to establishments such as this Toksook Bay post office.



## Outdoor Recreation provides tangible health benefits.

Outdoor recreation has direct ties to public health and wellness for all Alaskans. Outdoor spaces offer a wide range of benefits to the public. Access to outdoor areas like parks and trails increases public health by providing opportunities for exercise and improved mental health – and the results can be measured in terms of economic benefit. According to a 2015 study of the Mat-Su Borough,<sup>4</sup> the total annual health-related costs associated with obesity in Alaska were around \$276 million. That number was expected to increase to \$680 million by 2018. The study examined the Mat-Su Borough's outdoor spaces and concluded that access to outdoor areas saved Mat-Su residents approximately \$3.24 million a year in avoided healthcare costs and lost productivity.

Studies have shown<sup>8</sup> that nature has helped people cope with isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving many researchers to conclude that the physiological response to being outside in nature is real and measurable. The positive effects of outdoor recreation on individual physical and mental wellness translates to wellness in the overall community.

Outdoor recreation infrastructure supports access to outdoor education.

The Campbell Creek Science Center and surrounding Campbell Tract, both managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Anchorage, provide a diverse range of programs and activities to enhance STEM learning in a close-to-home, natural setting.

## Outdoor recreation directly supports **economic and workforce development.**

Outdoor recreation is a bigger, more complex economic category than it might initially appear. Covering a wide range of direct, indirect, and induced jobs and touching upon industries as diverse as manufacturing, marketing, retail, travel, and healthcare, outdoor recreation has enormous growth potential in the local and national economy.

The 2019 study conducted by the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development estimated that in-state customer spending related to outdoor recreation trips amounts to nearly \$3.2 billion annually. This spending alone created about 38,100 jobs.<sup>9</sup> According

to the same report, one job in every ten in Alaska is tied to outdoor recreation. The outdoor recreation industry serves Alaskans and visitors alike while boasting job opportunities as varied as the landscapes.

**EQUIPMENT** Direct spending on outdoor recreation gear like skis, snowmachines, bikes, hiking boots, or a fishing rod.

**ACTIVITIES** Spending on outdoor recreation activities and experiences. This might include a ski lift pass, guided fishing trip, lodging, rentals, or travel.

**MANUFACTURING** Production of material and gear used for outdoor recreation. In Alaska, this includes fat tire bikes, clothing, backpacking food, and pack rafts.

**SUPPORT SERVICES** The range of services that support outdoor recreation, from maintenance on sight-seeing planes to construction of cabins and trails to marketing.



Outdoor recreation creates jobs  
Photo by Alaska Trails



Alaska's outdoor spaces, parks, and trails offer the perfect setting for many year-round **outdoor events.**

Local competitions and outdoor events keep communities engaged and exercising, while events like the Iditarod draw tourists from around the world. These events bring athletes and spectators for multiple days, generating revenue in the local community.



Photo by Alaskaman Extreme Triathlon

Alaskaman Extreme Triathlon takes athletes on an epic journey through the cold waters of Resurrection Bay, along the beautifully scenic and mountainous passages of the Seward Highway, and up the extreme trails of Mount Alyeska over one of the hardest run courses in the sport.



**The Mt. Marathon race in Seward attracts some of the top mountain runners in the world.**

Photo by Joel Krahn, Seward Chamber of Commerce and Mt. Marathon Race Committee member

Outdoor recreation provides novel business opportunities.

Alaska-based outdoor equipment innovations have helped fuel a small manufacturing sector that caters to trail users in Alaska and have boosted sales in retail stores.

Fat-tire biking, Alaska's latest invention, has swept the state as the alternative to skiing in warmer, wetter conditions, and has now moved throughout the rest of the country.



Trails construction is a **growing business enterprise.**

There's real art to building trails that are a delight to use, have minimal impact, and are designed to minimize maintenance costs. Alaskan trail building non-profits and businesses are gaining national prominence for their skill in constructing sustainable trails.

Outdoor recreation spurs business for **guiding companies.**

Nationally and in Alaska, the outdoor recreation industry is growing faster than the baseline economy. Local outfitters benefit from expanding and diversifying their outdoor recreation options.



Salmonberry Tours provides guiding services in Southcentral Alaska.  
Photo by Salmonberry Tours

# SECTION C1

## SCORP and Federal Grant Programs in Alaska

The Land and Water Conservation program (LWCF) is considered one of America's most critical conservation programs, helping to create and expand public parklands and recreational opportunities for all users.

Since the program's inception in 1965, the National Park Service (NPS) has awarded approximately 42,000 LWCF matching grants to state and local governments in all 50 states and U.S. Territories totaling more than \$4.2 billion. In federal FY21, 531 awards were awarded nationwide for a total of \$230 million.

To date, Alaska has received almost \$48 million in LWCF investments. These LWCF awards are generated largely by receipts from federal offshore oil and gas leases, as stipulated by LWCF legislation, not from public taxes. LWCF assistance is available to States, then through States to local public governmental units.

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the LWCF State and Local Assistance matching grant program in close coordination with Alaska through a State Liaison Officer (SLO) and Alternate State Liaison Officers (ASLOs) designated by the Governor. DPOR, within Alaska's Department of Natural Resources, administers the LWCF program in partnership with NPS.

Each state is required to update its SCORP every five years to remain eligible to receive LWCF awards. Using LWCF, and state and locally matched funds, Alaska has created and enhanced a wide variety of state and city parks, expanded and improved campgrounds and other infrastructure, and designed new or improved trail systems. LWCF funds have also supported hockey rinks, athletic fields, bike paths, playgrounds, boardwalks, viewing decks, boat launches, public pavilions, and restrooms.

Recent upgrades in recreational sites have occurred in such places as Denali State Park, Metlakatla Indian Community, Haines, and Fairbanks.

The SCORP also serves the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) managed by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and the State of Alaska. FHWA requires that all projects funded under RTP "are identified in, or further a specific goal of a recreational trails plan or statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan." (U.S. Code Title 23 § 206.)

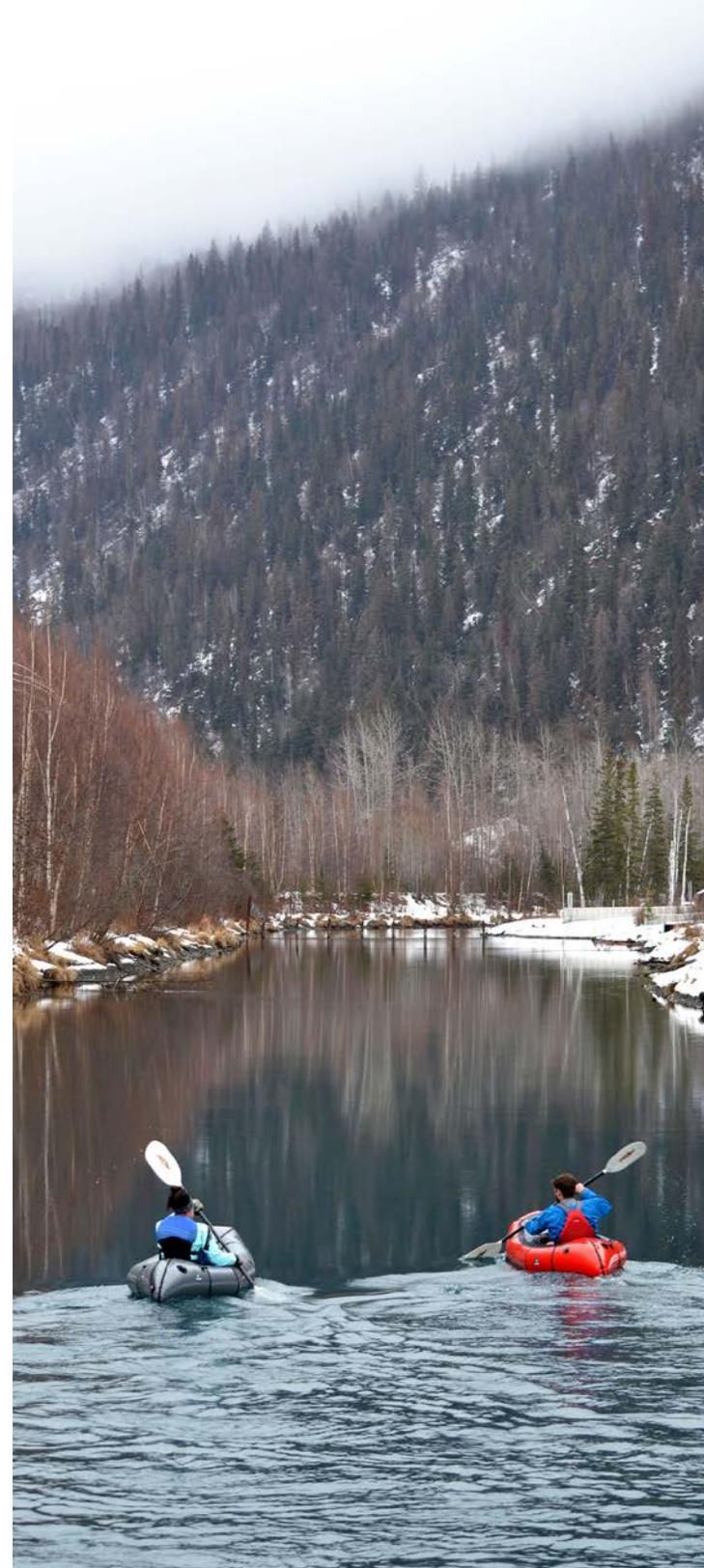
### ALASKA'S OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS (OPSP):

The OPSP is a critical link, connecting this SCORP to LWCF funding priorities and grant processes. It is used to determine how funding is applied among grant applicants, and it provides objective scoring criteria of awards based on statewide priorities for development of outdoor recreation resources and land acquisition.

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

Each grant cycle includes a minimum and maximum request amount for local projects such as \$25,000 minimum and \$250,000 maximum. The State of Alaska reserves the right to adjust these amounts for a grant cycle, when deemed necessary, to allow for broader



participation in the application process or to utilize the federal apportionment more fully. State of Alaska projects are not limited to the minimum or maximum amounts; nor do State projects compete against the local projects.

Typically, the State of Alaska designates half of each year's federal apportionment to DPOR projects and grants, the other half to local communities through a competitive application process. The State of Alaska may modify this 50-50 allocation of funds between state and local projects when deemed necessary or in the best interest of the recreating public to fully utilize an apportionment.

As part of the OPSP, DPOR convenes the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) for grant application evaluation and scoring. The ORTAB uses SCORP priorities to help determine which projects are recommended for LWCF and RTP grants.

The State's grant applications, evaluation, and scoring criteria are also updated to reflect the latest SCORP priorities. Doing so ensures that the most recent SCORP priorities guide the obligation of public dollars to projects that meet contemporary public outdoor recreation needs.

### CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PROPOSALS

Project proposals are evaluated using several factors. Among these are proposals which include:

1. statewide or regional significance
2. land manager support
3. approaching or at shovel-ready status
4. public support
5. diversity of projects (urban, rural, users, geographic)
6. project champions and advocates (partnerships and leveraging)
7. viable management and maintenance plans, and
8. SCORP goals

Although the SCORP lists 7 goals, LWCF applicants will be evaluated only on Goals 1, 4, and 5. Other goals represent tangential benefits to communities as they build capacity through long-term investment in quality outdoor recreation.

**GOAL 1:** Support the Alaska Outdoor Recreation Way of Life

**GOAL 2:** Make Outdoor Recreation a Cornerstone of Alaska's Economy

**GOAL 3:** Grow the Outdoor Recreation Workforce; Use Outdoor Recreation to Attract and Retain Residents and Businesses

**GOAL 4:** Empower and Enable Alaskans to Lead Active, Healthy Lives

**GOAL 5:** Balance Outdoor Recreation Growth and Stewardship

**GOAL 6:** Grow Stable and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Funding

**GOAL 7:** Strengthen Partnerships to Improve Outdoor Recreation Management

Passage of the Great America Outdoors Act (GAOA) stabilized national funding for the state component of LWCF. With that, the State of Alaska anticipates an open project selection process in the foreseeable future. The OPSP schedule is subject to variables such as DPOR staffing levels, available funding amounts, NPS funding opportunities, and ORTAB meeting dates. In general, the public may anticipate an annual timeline similar to the following:

**Announce:** Publicly announce anticipated funding and solicit preliminary applications. The call for applications is open for at least 90 days.

**Assist:** Provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, as needed, during the open cycle.

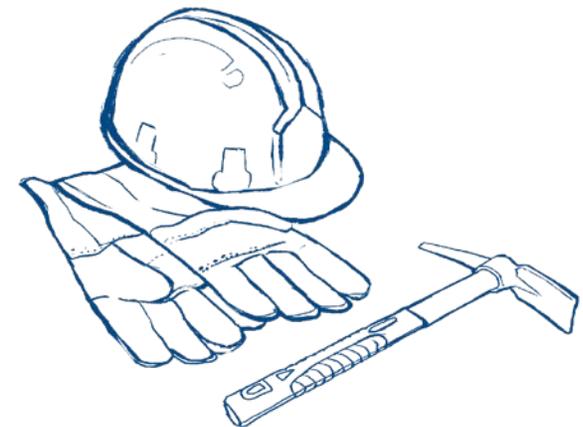
**Applications Due:** Preliminary applications are due to the SLO, ASLO, or DPOR Grants Administrator a minimum of 90 days after the public solicitation announcement.

**Initial Review:** DPOR staff perform initial reviews of preliminary applications for completeness, verify eligibility of applicant, and prepare applications for dissemination to ORTAB members prior to the public meeting. This process takes a minimum of 30 days, depending on the number of applications received.

**Convene ORTAB:** DPOR staff hosts a public meeting with ORTAB members – presenting preliminary applications for discussion and ranking for potential funding. The SLO or Division Director approves the final project ranking. DPOR staff notify applicants of ranking decisions and recommended funding levels.

**Contact Applicants:** DPOR Grants Administrator notifies applicants of recommended funding decisions. DPOR staff work with applicants, as needed, to complete and submit full application packages for NPS review.

**Applications to NPS:** DPOR staff compile and submit recommended application packages to NPS for final review, approval, and for inputting into Grants.gov during an open funding cycle.



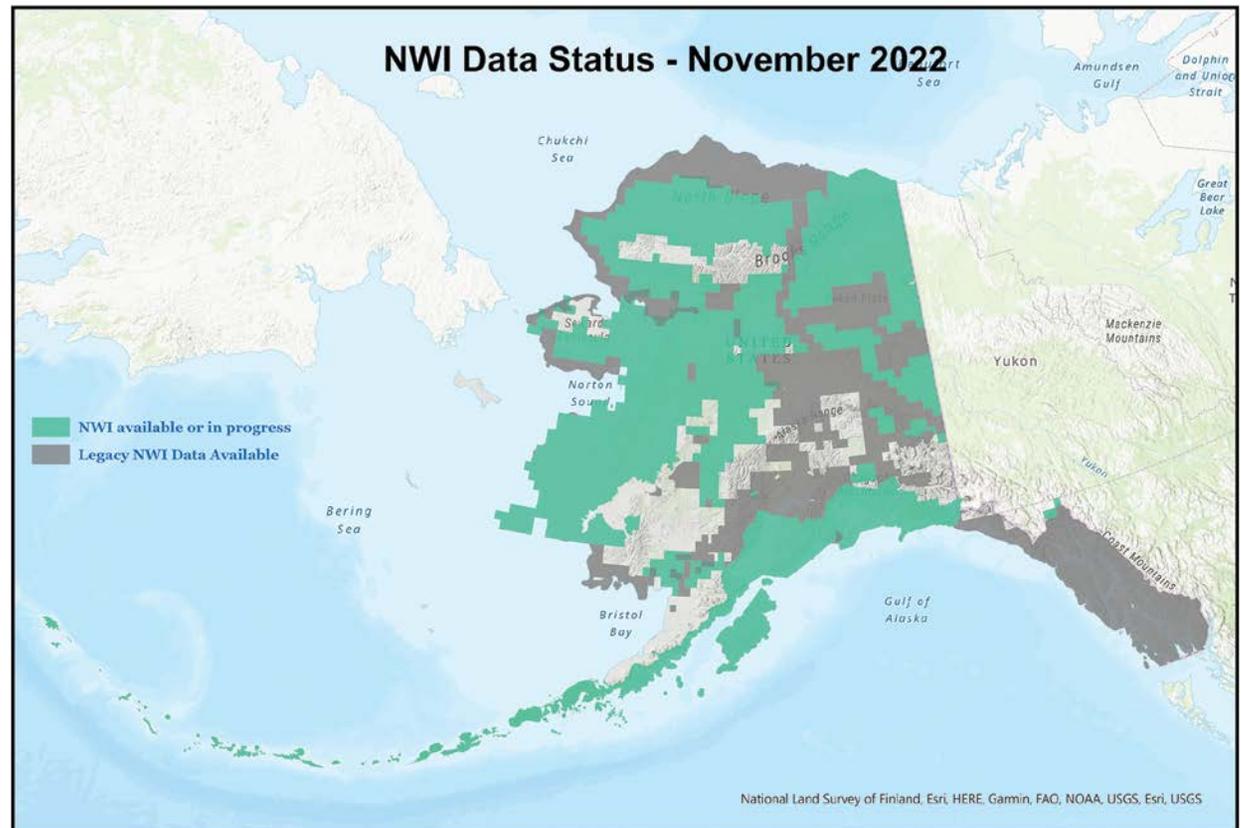
## SECTION C2

### Wetlands in Alaska: A Vital Economic, Ecological & Recreational Resource

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) recognizes the importance of wetlands as a vital contribution to many recreation experiences. As such, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) must specifically cover the importance of the wetlands to a state's recreation resources.

Almost 175 million acres, or 41 percent of Alaska, are classified as wetland<sup>5</sup> and that accounts for two-thirds of all wetlands in the United States.<sup>6</sup> And with all those wetlands, it should come as no surprise that many of Alaska's economic and recreation activities intersect with those wetlands. Alaska's wetland-reliant recreation opportunities are numerous and vary across each season.. There are few statewide studies in Alaska that have sought to quantify wetlands across the state, and even fewer comprehensive inventories. When managing resources, it is important to have a basic understanding of their type and location to develop appropriate management strategies.

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) contains the most comprehensive and standardized inventory of wetlands across the nation. Where the NWI is available it is used to support wetland conservation, recreation and infrastructure development and community planning. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is responsible for stewarding the NWI. FWS works closely with partners like the Alaska Geospatial Council and the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee to prioritize wetland mapping locations. To date, 45 percent of Alaska has been mapped according to NWI standards and as of August 2022, data production is occurring on an additional 32 percent of the state.<sup>2</sup> FWS hopes to have NWI coverage across all of Alaska by 2029.



#### WHAT IS A WETLAND?

Wetlands can be freshwater or saltwater. They come in all sizes and are exactly what they sound like; they are lands that experience high levels of wetness at some time throughout the year. The soils, vegetation and landform are evaluated to determine whether a location meets the definition for a wetland. A wetland is defined by a prevalence of vegetation adapted to live under saturated conditions for at least part of the growing season and soils and hydrology that support the existence of those conditions. In general terms

on the landscape, wetlands are the buffer region that transition from aquatic to terrestrial habitats.

#### NOT ALL WETLANDS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Think of all the places where Alaskans recreate and picture wetlands such as streambanks, marshes, bogs, ponds, estuaries, or tundra. Outdoor recreation in Alaska would not be the same without wetlands. Imagine fishing, hunting, bird watching, trapping, boating, photography, or wildlife viewing without healthy wetlands. It is important to not only know



where wetlands are, but the type and how they service the landscape. For example, certain birds prefer to nest in grassy wetlands versus sedge wetlands. Moose are often found browsing in shrubby wetlands. And bird watchers traveling by canoe may enjoy themselves in a permanently flooded system but be up to their knees in mud if they choose to explore a system that is only seasonally flooded. It is important to know where and how the wetlands are used in order to ensure the functionality they provide to an ecosystem is not lost.

About 88 percent of Alaska's wetlands are encompassed in public lands. But with the interconnected nature of wetlands, it can be important to acquire parcels that, if developed, could impact wetland ecosystems or limit public access.

### THREATS TO WETLANDS

Wetlands are changing 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, habitat destruction due to filling wetlands for development, introduction of invasive species, irresponsible ATV use, and resource extraction.

### BENEFITS OF WETLANDS

**Public Health:** 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.

### Conservation, Stewardship and Quality of Life:

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. These habitats have sustained communities for generations.

**Public Recreation Opportunities:** Alaskans depend on wetlands for both subsistence and sporting needs. Moose and duck hunting, fishing, bird watching, and berry gathering are just some of the recreational and subsistence activities that take place in wetlands.

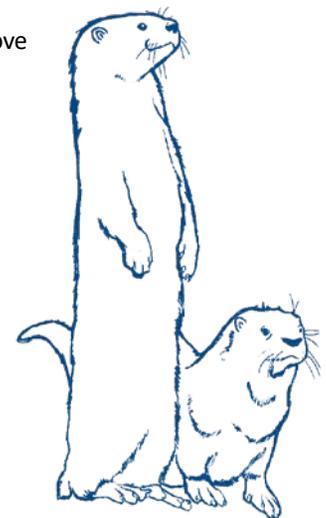
**Economic and Workforce Opportunities:** Fish and shellfish rely on wetlands for food and shelter. Wetlands are prime breeding habitat, and they serve as a nursery for young salmon until they adapt to salt water. Shorebirds and waterfowl extensively use wetlands for feeding, nesting, and breeding. These habitats support our strong recreation and commercial fishing industries.

### PRIORITIES FOR WETLAND ACQUISITION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan<sup>10</sup> 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, or
3. provide a high degree of public recreation benefit or value presently or potentially in the future.

DNR concurs with the above priority list for wetlands acquisitions.



# CHAPTER 1

## REFERENCES

All hyperlinks referenced in the 2023-2027 SCORP were active at time of writing.

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