

1 **Approved - Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)**
2 **Annual Meeting Minutes 1/6-7/2016**

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4 **ORTAB Members Present:**

- 5 Jeff Budd - Chair - Represents Southeast Alaska / Non-Motorized
- 6 Mike Rearden - Represents Western / Southwest Alaska
- 7 Ron Lurk - Represents Anchorage / Motorized / Diversified
- 8 Mickey Todd - Represents Motorized Trail Users
- 9 Seth Adams - Represents Fairbanks Area /Northern Area
- 10 Mike Sirofchuck – Represents Kodiak / Southwest/Non-Motorized trail users
- 11 Ira Edwards - Represents Trail Users Experiencing Disabilities

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13 **DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, (DPOR) Staff Present:**

- 14 Claire LeClair - DPOR, Deputy Director and Chief of Field Operations
- 15 Darcy Harris – DPOR, Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator
- 16 Steve Neel – DPOR, Recreational Trails Program Grants Administrator
- 17 Jean Ayers – DPOR, Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants Administrator
- 18 Justin Wholey – DPOR, Alaska State Trails Program, Natural Resource Specialist
- 19 Tiffany Vassar – DPOR, Director’s Office Administrative Assistant
- 20 Emily Angel – DPOR, Design and Construction, Interpretation and Education
- 21 Nicole Acevedo – DPOR, Design and Construction, Interpretation and Education
- 22 Brooks Ludwig – DPOR, Northern Region Superintendent
- 23 Jason Oakley – DPOR, Kachemak Bay Chief Ranger

24
25 **Public Present:**

- 26 Steve Cleary - Alaska Trails
- 27 Bill Holt - Tsalteshi Trails Association
- 28 Kim Sollien - Great Land Trust
- 29 Geoffrey Orth - Stray Dogs LLC
- 30 Anna Shaw – Anchorage Park Foundation
- 31 Elizabeth Trowbridge – Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- 32 Ed Strabel – Mat-Su Ski Club
- 33 Kevin Walker – Homer Yacht Club

40 **Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB)**

41 **Annual Meeting Minutes**

42 Wednesday, January 6th and Thursday January 7th 2016

43

44 **Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Discussion with DPOR Staff**

45

46 Steve Neel announced that a new national five year transportation bill was recently passed in Congress

47 and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was still included at the funding level from 2009. He said the

48 exact numbers from the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

49 were not available yet, but his estimates are as noted. Approximately \$1,527,000 is the anticipated

50 allocation from FHWA. The obligation limitation from State of Alaska DOT&PF is \$1,421,884. The

51 Administrative Allowance to manage the Trails Program Office is 7% or \$106,955. The total available to

52 fund trail projects will be approximately \$1,314,929. The 30/30/40 (motorized/non-

53 motorized/diversified) funding percentage ratio is still required, and each state still has a Governor opt-

54 out option.

55

56 Darcy Harris and Steve Neel reminded the ORTAB that FHWA now evaluates the RTP under CFR (Code of

57 Federal Regulations) 200. This CFR, adopted in December 2014, is strictly enforced by FHWA. Harris and

58 Neel reviewed the changes that will most affect applicants and grantees. They said FHWA will not allow

59 extensions to project end-dates or project modifications after they have been approved, unless the

60 causes are related to extreme weather events or other events out of the grantees' control. Neel said

61 that some applicants have already been affected by FHWA enforcing the fixed end-dates. The Buy

62 America Act requires any steel product purchased with FHWA dollars, that costs more than \$2,500, to

63 be made with 100% American Steel, and if not, a waiver is required. Neel explained that the Trails

64 Program Office applied for seven waivers during the 2015 grant cycle, and all were approved. The

65 process can take up to six months, so DPOR must submit waiver requests as soon as possible to increase

66 the possibility of attaining them by the summer field season. Harris explained that one of the reasons for

67 scheduling the meeting a month earlier was to increase the time for application approval. Neel then said

68 that FHWA now requires the correct match ratio be reported with each reimbursement request. Neel

69 also explained that a "tapered match agreement" would only be allowed with prior FHWA approval, and

70 in general this would only apply for large equipment purchases. He also noted that the new State IRIS

71 accounting system may slow down grant reimbursements temporarily over the following year as staff

72 learns the new system and bugs are worked out.

73

74 One ORTAB member asked if it was acceptable for applicants to exceed the required match amount.

75 Darcy Harris explained that some applicants show more match to illustrate that they have more support,

76 but FHWA can see excessive match as a reason to reduce the federal share. Also, once a larger-than-

77 required match ratio is approved, the grantee will be required to continue to show that level of match

78 for the life of the project.

80 **Project Applications from the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)**

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

82

83 **1. Trail Maintenance Equipment Purchase**

84 **Applicant:** DPOR, Chugach State Park

85 **Category:** Diversified

86 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$23,141 / \$2,297.05

87 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chugach State Park

88 **Project Discussion:**

89 One ORTAB member thought that the application seemed like it was done quickly and lacked passion.
90 He also noted that the applicant didn't specify which trails the equipment would be used on. He
91 wondered how long the equipment would last, as well. Another ORTAB member said that it could be
92 used on many motorized and non-motorized trails in the park, but questioned if RTP could pay for
93 "maintenance". Harris and Neel responded by saying that repetitive maintenance activities would not be
94 approved by FHWA, but this purchase would be acceptable because the equipment would be used for
95 clearing brush from the trails to improve safety, accessibility, and visibility.

96

97 **2. Kachemak Bay State Park Orientation Panels**

98 **Applicant:** DPOR, Design and Construction, Interpretation and Education

99 **Category:** Diversified

100 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$12,590 / \$1,394

101 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Kachemak Bay State Park

102 **Project Discussion:**

103 One ORTAB member said the application was clear, concise, and easy to read. Another ORTAB member
104 noted that since the mooring buoys will be on the orientation panels, the orientation panel project may
105 need to be done after the mooring buy project is done. Another ORTAB member pointed out that it cost
106 \$14,000 for to create an \$800 orientation panel. Emily Angel (from Interpretation and Education) said it
107 was easy and relatively inexpensive to update and install the panel if buoy locations change.

108

109 **3. Alaska State Park Trail Guide Videos**

110 **Applicant:** DPOR, Design and Construction, Interpretation and Education

111 **Category:** Safety & Education

112 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$37,500 / \$3,722.25

113 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Kachemak Bay State Park

114 **Project Discussion:**

115 One ORTAB member asked why DPOR would buy equipment and do this in house, when it could be
116 contracted out. Emily Angel (from Interpretation and Education) explained that there was an employee
117 with video editing experience in-house, and he made a promotional video for Chugach State Park last
118 summer. Another ORTAB member noted that it was a lot of money for equipment, but he expected

119 future use out of it after the grant. One ORTAB member asked if project success could be evaluated.
120 Emily Angel said that there is an in-office review process and YouTube views can be tracked.
121

122 **4. Caines Head SRA: Tonsina Section**

123 **Applicant:** DPOR, Kenai

124 **Category:** Diversified

125 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$48,309 / \$4,795

126 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Caines Head State Recreation Area

127 **Project Discussion:**

128 One ORTAB member liked the pictures that were included, and another liked the map included on the
129 public notice. Another ORTAB member appreciated the applicant taking the time to get local public
130 comments and awarded more points for this. One ORTAB member thought this was the best among the
131 State Parks applications. Another ORTAB member questioned what PPE was. Darcy Harris explained that
132 it was Personal Protective Equipment which can be protective clothing or gear when performing trail
133 work, but not logoed uniforms.
134

135 **5. Moose Valley/Poot Peak Trail Restorations**

136 **Applicant:** DPOR, Kenai

137 **Category:** Diversified

138 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,991 / \$5,044

139 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Kachemak Bay State Park

140 **Project Discussion:**

141 One ORTAB member noted that the Kachemak Bay State Park Advisory Board gave this project priority.
142 Another ORTAB member thought that this project seemed expensive considering the estimated 300
143 users per year, while another ORTAB member thought that if the trails were improved the user numbers
144 would increase. One ORTAB member was concerned that these trails would not be maintained after the
145 project ended, because there is no maintenance money in the State budget. Another ORTAB member
146 questioned the need of camping gear and tools and wondered if Parks already had this sort of gear. An
147 ORTAB member said that the gear and tools get used hard and needed to be replaced often, and that
148 these grants are the only funding that trail crews receive.
149

150 **6. Saddle Trail Reroute – Phase II**

151 **Applicant:** DPOR, Kenai

152 **Category:** Diversified

153 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,994 / \$5,041

154 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Kachemak Bay State Park

155 **Project Discussion:**

156 One ORTAB member thought that the Alaska Conservation Corps labor was very inexpensive at \$14 per
157 hour. Another ORTAB member didn't see any bids for equipment, food, or transportation costs; Darcy

158 Harris noted that she received cost estimates via email after it was determined that volunteers couldn't
159 ride in State Parks operated boats.

160

161 **7. Curry Ridge Trail – Phase II**

162 **Applicant:** DPOR, Matanuska-Susitna Valley

163 **Category:** Non-Motorized

164 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,918 / \$4,997

165 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Denali State Park

166 **Project Discussion:**

167 ORTAB members were unsure if the campground and parking lot had been completed, and because of
168 this some scored the project lower. Another ORTAB member didn't think the Denali Visitor Center would
169 be built, and because of this there wouldn't be many trail-users. Claire LeClair later came in and clarified
170 that both the campground and parking lot had been constructed. One ORTAB member noted that there
171 was more information on the visitor center than the trail in the RTP application.

172

173 **8. Northern Area Training & Assessment**

174 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region

175 **Category:** Diversified

176 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$13,313 / \$1,322

177 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area

178 **Project Discussion:**

179 One ORTAB member wondered if the parks already had similar equipment as the kind asked for in the
180 grant.

181

182 **9. Angel Creek Hillside Bridge Repairs**

183 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region

184 **Category:** Motorized

185 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$24,190 / \$2,401

186 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area

187 **Project Discussion:**

188 One ORTAB member asked if equipment owned by State Parks could be used for match, with the value
189 coming from hypothetical rental fees for that equipment. Darcy Harris said this was allowable. Another
190 ORTAB member thought that 150,000 users was likely the number of users in the park yearly, and not
191 just on this trail.

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197 **10. Eagle Trail**
198 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region
199 **Category:** Non-Motorized
200 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$35,471 / \$3,521
201 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Eagle Trail State Recreation Site
202 **Project Discussion:**
203 ORTAB members noted typos in the application.
204

205 **11. Granite Tors Boardwalk Repairs**
206 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region
207 **Category:** Non-Motorized
208 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$38,808 / \$3,852
209 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area
210 **Project Discussion:**
211 One ORTAB member thought that the cost to replace 150 boards seemed expensive. Another ORTAB
212 member questioned the use of untreated lumber instead of treated; Northern Region Superintendent
213 Brooks Ludwig noted that about half the untreated boards from 1982 are still in good shape.
214

215 **12. Mastodon Trail Construction**
216 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region
217 **Category:** Diversified
218 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$50,000 / \$4,963
219 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area
220 **Project Discussion:**
221 One ORTAB member thought it would be unfortunate not to fund this project since ORTAB has
222 recommended funding for the Mastodon Trail in the past. A few ORTAB members said it was difficult to
223 understand the project due to a confusing project description. Even with the confusing application, one
224 ORTAB member said, he expected the work would be done well.
225

226 **13. Mastodon Trail Hardening / Clearing**
227 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region
228 **Category:** Diversified
229 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,572 / \$4,930.65
230 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area
231 **Project Discussion:**
232 One ORTAB member thought that the project description was confusing.
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236 **14. Stiles Extension Construction**

237 **Applicant:** DPOR, Northern Region

238 **Category:** Motorized

239 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$50,000 / \$4,963

240 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chena River State Recreation Area

241 **Project Discussion:**

242 One ORTAB member asked if those in the trail crew really highly trained, and if so why do they need
243 training (from the Training & Assessment grant)? Darcy Harris said that after their training they will be
244 highly trained. Steve Neel noted that these grants have been approved by FHWA in the past.

245

246 **15. Battery Point Trail – Phase II**

247 **Applicant:** DPOR, Southeast

248 **Category:** Non-Motorized

249 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$28,676 / \$2,847

250 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Chilkat State Park

251 **Project Discussion:**

252 An ORTAB member questioned the need for crushed gravel, when they originally used beach gravel.
253 Another ORTAB member explained that the angular crushed gravel compacts much better than the
254 rounded beach gravel. One ORTAB member thought the match seemed to be “reverse-engineered”;
255 Darcy Harris agreed, because applicants are encouraged to submit only the exact amount of required
256 match.

257

258 **16. Granite Creek Trail Improvement**

259 **Applicant:** DPOR, Southeast

260 **Category:** Non-Motorized

261 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,993 / \$4,962.44

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

263 **Project Discussion:**

264 An ORTAB member noted that the same applicant also applied for the Point Bridget project. The same
265 trail crew would be used for both projects.

266

267 **17. Point Bridget Trail Restoration – Phase II**

268 **Applicant:** DPOR, Southeast

269 **Category:** Non-Motorized

270 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,982 / \$4,961.35

271 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Point Bridget State Park

272 **Project Discussion:**

273 An ORTAB member noted that even though Granite Creek and Point Bridget projects would be done by
274 the same trail crew, they didn’t double up on gear in case only one was funded.

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Project Applications from Non-State Entities

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

1. Tsalteshi Trails Association Single Track

Applicant: Tsalteshi Trails Association

Category: Diversified

Funds Requested / Match: \$50,000 / \$12,500

Land Owner(s): Kenai Peninsula Borough

Project Discussion:

One ORTAB member noted that the application was well written and easy to follow. Bill Holt (representing Tsalteshi Trails Association) explained that this project will help keep bikes off of the ski trails in winter. Steve Neel noted that there was an issue last year with a grant from Tsalteshi trails, where the final billing came in after the final end date. Neel also noted that Parks had filed an appeal to FHWA to try and receive this reimbursement. Bill Holt explained that the dealer went out of business in the middle of the purchase prolonging the process. One ORTAB member said he would have given more points if a letter from a youth group had been provided.

2. Mirror Lake Singletrack - Phase 1

Applicant: Alaska Trails, Inc.

Category: Diversified

Funds Requested / Match: \$50,000 / \$12,500

Land Owner(s): Municipality of Anchorage

Project Discussion:

One ORTAB member asked how bikes used the trail in the winter. Steve Cleary explained that the trails are packed and groomed for winter use. ORTAB members referenced dragging a tire for winter grooming. Another ORTAB member complemented the application for lack of clutter. One ORTAB member thought that the grant was heavy in administration costs. Another ORTAB member said they would have given more points if there was a letter from a volunteer group pledging support. One ORTAB member questioned if landowner authorization was sufficient. Steve Cleary said he was working with Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, but he could get a more explicit letter from the land owner if necessary.

3. Russian Jack Mountain Bike Trails

Applicant: Alaska Trails, Inc.

Category: Diversified

Funds Requested / Match: \$33,000 / \$8,250

Land Owner(s): Municipality of Anchorage

Project Discussion:

One ORTAB member liked that the trails would be close to so many schools, and another liked how they would be located in an urban park. Another ORTAB member noted that signs were mentioned in the

316 application, yet there were no line items in the budget for signs. An ORTAB member also noted that who
317 the volunteers are weren't mentioned in the application. Steve Cleary explained that the signs were part
318 of a vision by the Anchorage Park Foundation and not this project specifically, and that there would be
319 Alaska Trails' volunteers and people from local mountain bike groups. One ORTAB member noted that
320 volunteer training was almost the same amount of time as volunteer work hours in the budget; Cleary
321 said there would actually be much more volunteer labor, but he provided the required match in the
322 budget, and didn't exceed this per DPOR's request. Another ORTAB member noted that he would have
323 given more points if there was a better estimate of user numbers, and not just the estimate of
324 "hundreds."

325

326 **4. Improvements at Jodhpur Motocross Track**

327 **Applicant:** Anchorage Park Foundation

328 **Category:** Motorized

329 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$47,789 / \$11,947

330 **Land Owner(s):** Municipality of Anchorage

331 **Project Discussion:**

332 One ORTAB member liked the maps and layout. Another ORTAB member thought the bleachers were
333 very expensive and that they would be shipped to Alaska from too far away. A couple ORTAB members
334 noted that they knew found cheaper bleachers and signs online.

335

336 **5. Rilke Schule Trail Connection to Meadow Park**

337 **Applicant:** Anchorage Park Foundation

338 **Category:** Diversified

339 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$33,782 / \$8,445

340 **Land Owner(s):** Independent Baptist Church

341 **Project Discussion:**

342 One ORTAB member asked what the maintenance plan would be. Anna Shaw (of the Anchorage Park
343 Foundation) said that a parent group helped put this application together and are very involved, and
344 would be involved in maintenance. One ORTAB member questioned if three days was enough time to
345 construct three bridges. Another ORTAB member noted that budget totals differed between page 5 and
346 9 of the application. One ORTAB member noted that he would have added more points had there been
347 a letter from the youth group with dates. Another ORTAB member said he scored the application lower
348 because there was only five years of public-use authorization (which is the minimum required amount).
349 One ORTAB member noted that there was a 10% contingency, and Darcy Harris clarified that only the
350 authorized amount can be reimbursed; it would not be possible to pay for a contingency on top of that.

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356 **6. Bluff Cabin Trail Restoration**

357 **Applicant:** Delta Junction Trails Association

358 **Category:** Motorized

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

360 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Mining, Land, and Water

361 **Project Discussion:**

362 One ORTAB member liked that this trail was in a rural community. A few ORTAB members were
363 concerned that there was no barrier to prevent 4x4 highway vehicles from damaging the trail after the
364 grant project is finished. Geoff Orth (trail consultant hired for the project) noted that he will apply to
365 change the easement to disallow 4x4 highway vehicles, and has been discussing this with DNR in
366 Fairbanks. Another ORTAB member noted that there was no estimate for user numbers; Geoff Orth said
367 that there is heavy use on the trail as evidenced by the trail damage. One ORTAB member asked why
368 Little Davis-Bacon wages are included in the project. Darcy Harris and Geoff Orth clarified that it is
369 required for contractors. Another ORTAB member had trouble figuring out what some acronyms meant
370 in the grant application.

371

372 **7. Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies Interpretive Trails Improvement**

373 **Applicant:** Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies

374 **Category:** Non-Motorized

375 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$16,067 / \$5,335.75

376 **Land Owner(s):** Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies

377 **Project Discussion:**

378 One ORTAB member thought that the application was well written. Another ORTAB member thought
379 that the sign was very expensive, and shipped from very far away, and the map was so-so. Beth
380 Trowbridge (from Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies) said she knew the price seemed high, but the
381 cheapest signs didn't seem durable enough, so they chose the middle priced sign. The ORTAB also asked
382 if a user fee was required to use the trails. Trowbridge said that there was a user fee at certain times;
383 Darcy Harris stated that the access has to be little or no cost so this was okay. Several ORTAB members
384 noted there was a discrepancy between the budget and budget-narrative regarding sign art. Trowbridge
385 stated that she forgot to update the budget, but updated the budget narrative to reflect more hours for
386 artist work. Harris said that this part of the budget could be updated later.

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395 **8. Eyak River Trail Reconstruction Project**

396 **Applicant:** U.S. D.A. Forest Service, Cordova Ranger District

397 **Category:** Non-Motorized

398 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$26,291 / \$6,573

399 **Land Owner(s):** U.S. D.A. Forest Service, Cordova Ranger District

400 **Project Discussion:**

401 One ORTAB member thought the narrative was difficult to read, and another ORTAB member noted that
402 there were staff members mentioned in the budget narrative that weren't mentioned in the budget
403 spreadsheet.

404

405 **9. Fairbanks North Star Borough Trail Systems Enhancement Equipment**

406 **Applicant:** Fairbanks North Star Borough, Parks and Recreation

407 **Category:** Diversified

408 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$37,043 / \$9,261

409 **Land Owner(s):** Fairbanks North Star Borough

410 **Project Discussion:**

411 One ORTAB member commented that the grant was well written. Another ORTAB member thought that
412 three quotes seemed to be from the same place, but another ORTAB member pointed out that they
413 were different locations of the same distributors.

414

415 **10. North Pole Beaver Springs Trail Upgrade**

416 **Applicant:** Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District

417 **Category:** Non-Motorized

418 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$22,244 / \$5,561.30

419 **Land Owner(s):** Santa Clause House, Inc. and Fairbanks North Star Borough

420 **Project Discussion:**

421 One ORTAB member noted that many documents were sideways in the scan, and another thought
422 \$1500 was expensive for a trash can.

423

424 **11. Wasilla Creek Wetlands - Refuge Trail**

425 **Applicant:** Great Land Trust

426 **Category:** Non-Motorized

427 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$34,718 / \$10,282

428 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge

429 **Project Discussion:**

430 One ORTAB member noted that the applicant was disqualified last year because the scope of their
431 project had changed.

432

433

434 **12. Farewell Lake to Salmon River Trail Work**

435 **Applicant:** Iditarod Trail Committee

436 **Category:** Motorized

437 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$99,952 / \$24,988

438 **Land Owner(s):** State of Alaska and the Bureau of Land Management

439 **Project Discussion:**

440 One ORTAB member thought that this was a lot of money for equipment and flights.

441

442 **13. Jones Point Recreational Trail Upgrade**

443 **Applicant:** Takshanuk Watershed Council

444 **Category:** Non-Motorized

445 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$15,125 / \$8,690

446 **Land Owner(s):** Takshanuk Watershed Council

447 **Project Discussion:**

448 One ORTAB member thought that this project offered a lot of “bang for the buck”. Another ORTAB
449 member asked if the value of the land can be used as match (as stated in the application). Darcy Harris
450 explained that if a land purchase is made specifically to build a trail, and an RTP grant application to
451 build this trail is submitted within 18 months of the purchase, the appraisal value can be used as match;
452 she also noted that Takshanuk Watershed Council was in the process of getting an appraisal.

453

454 **14. Kachemak Nordic Ski Club Trail Grooming Equipment**

455 **Applicant:** Kachemak Nordic Ski Club

456 **Category:** Diversified

457 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$16,282 / \$4,071

458 **Land Owner(s):** Cook Inlet Region Incorporated and Kenai Peninsula Borough

459 **Project Discussion:**

460 An ORTAB member commented that the application was well written, and another asked how long the
461 equipment is expected to last. The applicant said the one they have now has lasted 5 years with no
462 problems.

463

464 **15. Kachemak Bay Mooring Buoys**

465 **Applicant:** Homer Yacht Club

466 **Category:** Motorized

467 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$64,477 / \$21,534.82

468 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Kachemak Bay State Park and State of Alaska, DNR, Division of
469 Mining Land and Water

470 **Project Discussion:**

471 One ORTAB member thought it would be nice to have these mooring buoys. Another ORTAB member
472 also thought it would be nice, but pointed out that there were reasons that State parks originally
473 removed them including maintenance and liability; there is also a potential conflict with seiners. One

474 ORTAB member mentioned that there is a proposed buoy off of an island which is a sensitive historical
475 site; the historical significance was not mentioned in the application; he also noted that without money
476 for deferred maintenance the buoys had to be removed. One ORTAB member thought that support
477 letters were from folks that really didn't want the public to use them. Another ORTAB member thought
478 the project sounded like a motorized water trail, and that it would nice if the buoy locations were
479 specified already instead of having only possible locations identified. Some of the ORTAB members
480 wanted more information about the 30-person Coast Guard crew that was identified in the application
481 to assist with the project; it was only mentioned briefly. There was also no letter from the Coast Guard
482 included. Several ORTAB members were worried about maintenance, and questioned who would own
483 these after they were installed. Darcy Harris said that the State of Alaska would be liable after their
484 installation. One ORTAB member said he'd feel better if fewer buoys were funded, and another asked if
485 only some of the buoys could be funded. Darcy Harris said that would change the scope of the project
486 and would not be possible during this grant cycle. One ORTAB member wanted to hear an opinion from
487 the eventual owner. Another ORTAB member wanted the applicant to resubmit after addressing the
488 board's concerns. One ORTAB member said he could call the applicant to express the board's concerns
489 and encourage resubmittal if the project was not recommended.

490
491 ORTAB asked Jason Oakley (DPOR, Kachemak Bay Chief Ranger) if his State Park will maintain the buoys
492 if they are installed. He said that DPOR would be willing to maintain them, although there is no money
493 to do so. Oakley also said an emphasis on maintenance from another organization should be given.
494 ORTAB members also asked if there was a certification needed for divers performing buoy maintenance,
495 and if DPOR could perform any repairs. Oakley said "maybe a small fix," and he wasn't sure about the
496 certification. When asked about seiner concerns, he said people could keep a dialogue open. He also
497 said that it was his understanding that most of the old buoys washed away and were not removed.

498
499 Kevin Walker (the applicant's representative) explained that buoys in Washington State are maintained
500 and inspected 2-3 years by a dedicated team. The applicant's plan is to inspect each buoy with a diver
501 just before the grant closes in two years, and if there are any problems, everything except the anchor
502 can be removed and marked with underwater buoy. He said the group could replace buoys with another
503 RTP grant or use another funding source. He said that several groups are interested in keeping the buoys
504 going, including the Homer Yacht Club, the Wooden Boat Society, the Friends of Kachemak Bay State
505 Park, and the Kachemak Bay Water Trail. All of these groups, he said, have "dozens or hundreds of
506 members." With these groups, he said, there "would be enough" volunteers and contributions for
507 maintenance and replacement parts. Walker said that he knew 5 divers that have 2 boats and could do
508 maintenance for the cost of the gas. Also, the Coast Guard, as well as other organizations, "may" be able
509 to help.

510
511 Darcy Harris asked about future liability. Walker said if a buoy broke and a boat washed on shore that
512 would "be a problem". He said that "we" needed to make sure larger boats don't tie up to this during a
513 storm and put too much stress on the system, but these systems are over-engineered to prevent this,
514 and "hopefully" this wouldn't happen. Harris said that the project should not rely on Alaska State Parks

515 being liable. Darcy Harris said she was concerned that this project was not “shovel ready” and there
516 were still a lot of unanswered questions.

517
518 Walker also noted that the seiner representative was at the last Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
519 meeting, and agreed to place buoys in a locations with less conflict with seining. Walker said the seiner
520 representative had buoy waypoints and can work with the Homer Yacht Club on this project. “The buoys
521 could be temporarily removed during seining season which is short”, Walker said.

522

523 **16. Ski Trail Grooming Equipment**

524 **Applicant:** Mat-Su Ski Club

525 **Category:** Non-Motorized

526 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$49,641 / \$12,410

527 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks and Matanuska-Susitna Borough

528 **Project Discussion:**

529 One ORTAB member said that the application was well written and had many support letters. Another
530 ORTAB member questioned how difficult it was to get a Buy America waiver. Darcy Harris said that every
531 application for a Buy America waiver sent to FHWA in 2015 had been approved. An ORTAB member also
532 noted that there were specific features of this machine that weren’t available on other machines.

533

534 **17. Mosquito Cove Trail (Storm Damage) Repair**

535 **Applicant:** Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

536 **Category:** Non-Motorized

537 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$39,840 / \$10,103

538 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks and U.S. Forest Service

539 **Project Discussion:**

540 An ORTAB member liked the foot-by-foot trail documentation. Another ORTAB member noted that this
541 is a popular trail in Sitka with lots of water damage and blow-downs with temporary fixes, and there are
542 no State Parks staff members in Sitka. One ORTAB member thought that this “wasn’t the best grant
543 application.” Another ORTAB Member said that there were many separate files making it difficult to
544 review on a computer, and many attachments were “fuzzy and hard to read”. One ORTAB member
545 noted that information about the project is available, but it is scattered in different parts of the
546 application. One ORTAB member questioned if a helicopter is needed to move gravel, and another
547 explained that the trail is narrow and hilly, so “yes”.

548

549

550

551

552

553

554 **18. Youth Conservation Corps Denali State Park**

555 **Applicant:** Upper Susitna Soil & Water Conservation District

556 **Category:** Non-Motorized

557 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$6,851 / \$1,712.80

558 **Land Owner(s):** Alaska State Parks, Denali State Park

559 **Project Discussion:**

560 One ORTAB member thought this project had an “easy-to-follow budget”. Another ORTAB member said
561 the applicant turned in a much better application than last year. Another ORTAB member wasn’t sure
562 how important the project was, and the organization might just be looking for anything to provide
563 funding.

564

565 **19. Windsock Trail Upgrade**

566 **Applicant:** Willow Area Community Organization and Willow Trail Committee

567 **Category:** Diversified

568 **Funds Requested / Match:** \$14,560 / \$3,640

569 **Land Owner(s):** Mat-Su Borough, Matanuska Recreation Co., Todd and Carrie Smolden, Byron Elzig

570 **Project Discussion:**

571 One ORTAB member asked if there was land owner authorization, and another was curious if the survey
572 had been completed. One ORTAB member noted that there were materials mentioned in the project
573 description that weren’t mentioned in the budget, and Darcy Harris said that FHWA wanted the big
574 picture of all materials to be used. One ORTAB member stated that this is definitely a diversified project.
575 Another ORTAB member wanted to hear from the land owners of the project.

576

577 **Motion:**

578 Mickey Todd moved to accept the budget (as in the RTP spreadsheet) as written. Mike Sirofchuk
579 seconded.

580

581 **Vote:** (7 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

582

583 The budget was accepted.

584

585 **State RTP Projects Recommended for Funding by ORTAB (but not officially approved)**

- 586 1. Trail Maintenance Equipment Purchase
587 2. Kachemak Bay State Park Orientation Panels
588 3. Alaska State Park Trail Guide Videos
589 4. Caines Head SRA: Tonsina Section
590 5. Moose Valley/Poot Peak Trail Restorations
591 6. Saddle Trail Reroute – Phase II
592 8. Northern Area Training & Assessment
593 9. Angel Creek Hillside Bridge Repairs

- 594 10. Eagle Trail
- 595 12. Mastodon Trail Construction
- 596 13. Mastodon Trail Hardening / Clearing
- 597 14. Stiles Extension Construction
- 598 15. Battery Point Trail – Phase II
- 599 16. Granite Creek Trail Improvement
- 600 17. Point Bridget Trail Restoration – Phase II

601

602 **Non-State RTP Projects Recommended for Funding by ORTAB (but not officially approved)**

- 603 1. Tsalteshi Trails Association Single Track
- 604 2. Mirror Lake Singletrack - Phase 1
- 605 3. Russian Jack Mountain Bike Trails
- 606 4. Improvements at Jodhpur Motocross Track
- 607 5. Rilke Schule Trail Connection to Meadow Park
- 608 6. Bluff Cabin Trail Restoration
- 609 7. Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies Interpretive Trails Improvement
- 610 8. Eyak River Trail Reconstruction Project
- 611 9. Fairbanks North Star Borough Trail Systems Enhancement Equipment
- 612 11. Wasilla Creek Wetlands - Refuge Trail
- 613 12. Farewell Lake to Salmon River Trail Work
- 614 13. Jones Point Recreational Trail Upgrade
- 615 14. Kachemak Nordic Ski Club Trail Grooming Equipment
- 616 15. Kachemak Bay Mooring Buoys
- 617 16. Ski Trail Grooming Equipment
- 618 17. Mosquito Cove Trail (Storm Damage) Repair
- 619 18. Youth Conservation Corps Denali State Park
- 620 19. Windsock Trail Upgrade

621

622 **Projects Not Recommended by ORTAB for Funding**

- 623 7. Curry Ridge Trail – Phase II
- 624 11. Granite Tors Boardwalk Repairs
- 625 10. North Pole Beaver Springs Trail Upgrade

626

627 **Discussion with Deputy Director and Operations Manager LeClair**

628

629 Deputy Director and Division Operations Manager Claire LeClair offered to answer any questions ORTAB
630 had. A few ORTAB members noted that the State Parks applications were of “lower quality than the non-
631 state applications” and “it seemed like they tried to get through them as quickly as possible;” some had
632 spelling errors. One ORTAB member pointed out that they know State Parks employees are
633 “passionate,” but that doesn’t necessarily come across in the applications. Another ORTAB member
634 thought that the project descriptions for Chena River State Recreation Area needed to improve. A few

635 ORTAB members also said they wanted to see more than just advisory board letters for public support.
636 One ORTAB member said he'd rather see a superintendent's time spent on things other than grant
637 applications, because he thought the projects would be well implemented. LeClair said it sounded like
638 ORTAB wanted to see better quality applications, although they thought the projects were valuable; she
639 also noted that the applications shouldn't take a long time to decipher and they should be written more
640 clearly.

641
642 LeClair explained that she is glad RTP money continues to come into the state, and none of these State
643 Parks projects will happen without this federal funding. She also said that current deferred maintenance
644 in the parks (maintenance that has not been done) would cost 60 million dollars to complete, and there
645 is no funding for this. This deferred maintenance value doesn't include trails.

646
647 When LeClair was asked if field staff had warehouses of tools and camping gear, LeClair said she was
648 unsure, but it would be good for the field staff to communicate if they had those items. One ORTAB
649 member thought that if DPOR grant applicants were requesting new tools and camping gear in their
650 applications, that they should disclose if they are trying to replace worn out or unsafe gear. Another
651 ORTAB member thought that DPOR applicants should be on the phone during the annual ORTAB
652 meetings to help answer questions. Another ORTAB member stated that more motorized projects could
653 be funded if more applications were submitted for Motorized projects; Leclair said she would pass this
654 on the superintendents.

655

656 **Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Discussion with Jean Ayers**

657
658 Jean Ayers, LWCF Grants Administrator, stated that for the past decade LWCF applications were only
659 accepted every other year, because federal funding for LWCF has been so low. However, next year the
660 program is expecting to receive almost three times the funding of past years. The National Park Service
661 may issue roughly one million dollars to Alaska in the 2016 grant cycle. Half of those funds will be
662 designated for state projects and half for projects sponsored by local communities. She encouraged
663 ORTAB to spread the word in their communities about the upcoming grant cycle which will open late
664 this summer or early fall 2016.

665
666 Ayers stated that the U.S. Congress reauthorized the LWCF program for three years, instead of the usual
667 20 or 25 years, and noted that discussion will continue about possible changes to the LWCF grant
668 program. She explained that the most controversial aspect of the LWCF program rests with the "federal"
669 side of LWCF, with its focus on federal land acquisition. However, most in Congress support the
670 "stateside" assistance LWCF offers for close-to-home recreational projects. Unfortunately, some people
671 get confused about the stateside program versus the federal side. Ayers welcomed support from
672 governmental agencies and grass roots organizations that appreciate the recreational opportunities
673 provided by LWCF.

674

675 Ayers said there have been 330 LWCF projects in Alaska since the program’s inception in 1965, and we
676 currently have 16 active projects statewide. The maximum grant request per project is currently
677 \$125,000, and the minimum grant request has been lowered from \$100,000 to \$50,000, since the 50%
678 match was difficult for smaller communities to come up with.

679
680 When asked what the LWCF grants could be used for, Ayers gave examples of various projects such as
681 skate parks in Bethel and Sitka, tot lots in Anchorage, boat launches at Finger Lake, trails and picnic area
682 at Tanana Lakes in Fairbanks, and the Salonie Creek Rifle Range in Kodiak. She explained that the
683 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) identifies project priorities based on public
684 surveys conducted every 5 years. The most recent survey (which will be incorporated into the SCORP
685 being updated this year) indicated a high priority for maintaining current facilities rather than adding
686 new ones. Ayers noted that the ORTAB will use the priorities delineated in the updated SCORP to help
687 make funding recommendations. Ayers added that most any public outdoor recreation facility can be
688 recommended for funding, (including land acquisition, though not a high priority) as long as it fits a
689 project type identified in the SCORP. Darcy Harris noted that application deadlines can be changed to
690 accommodate the meeting next year in preparation for the extra number of grants anticipated.

691

692
693

Final Discussion

694 One ORTAB member asked if there could be an official promotion of RTP grants to villages and rural
695 Alaska other than ORTAB just telling friends in their communities. Darcy Harris mentioned that
696 announcements on village radio stations are often free, and wanted to make sure that folks were
697 applying for eligible projects. Another ORTAB member noted that there are time limits on these sorts of
698 announcements. One member said he would write up an announcement, and another ORTAB member
699 advised for an ad to be no more than 30 seconds long.

700

701 One ORTAB member thought that “checkered land ownership” is a problem that makes these projects
702 difficult to implement in rural Alaska. Another ORTAB member asked if something like NANA Nordic (a
703 program that teaches kids to ski in rural Alaska) could be funded by RTP. Also, he said, some villages
704 have Nordic ski programs and could use the funds; he said he will talk to Native health corporations to
705 garner interest. One ORTAB member asked why there can’t be a focus on building rural safety cabins.
706 Another ORTAB member explained that people travel faster today and use them less often; they also fall
707 into disrepair after a couple years. Another idea discussed by the ORTAB was to get professional grant
708 writers in touch with rural applicants. Steve Neel noted that out of the 400+ grants he’s seen while
709 working as a DPOR Grants Administrator, only four have been west of Wasilla. Darcy Harris said she
710 could look into DNR distributing news releases throughout the state to promote the program.

711

712 Darcy Harris said that a meeting earlier in the year may increase project approval rates prior to the field
713 season, and asked if January would work for next year’s meeting. There were concerns that with both
714 RTP and LWCF grants next year, there wouldn’t be enough time for the ORTAB to score the applications.
715 Harris suggested pushing the application period earlier and sending ORTAB the LWCF grants when they

716 become available (as early as possible). One ORTAB member mentioned that September is a busy month
717 in Fairbanks, and an October deadline would interfere with that. Another ORTAB member suggested the
718 application due date should be November 1st instead of November 15th. January 4-5, 2017 are next
719 year's tentative meeting dates. Harris said her goal will be to get applications to the ORTAB by
720 December 1st and send LWCF grants to them as they come in. One ORTAB member also suggested
721 putting the applications online for other ORTAB members to download.

722

723 Darcy Harris reminded those ORTAB members whose terms will expire this year, to send in letters of
724 continued interest if they wish to continue to serve. She still intends to publish a news release
725 advertising the positions. One ORTAB member asked how many ORTAB members there were supposed
726 to be, and noted that if member(s) are added, the number should increase by two for voting purposes.
727 Harris said there is not a required number of members.

728

729 The ORTAB then made suggestions to improve the applications. Suggestions included fixing incorrect
730 page numbers, adding the text "projects should be available at little to no cost to the public," and to
731 encourage applicants to submit better maps. Another idea from the ORTAB was to encourage applicants
732 to score their own grant applications (with score sheets) after compiling their packages. One ORTAB
733 member suggested requiring only two files in the application submittals, the application with
734 attachments and the budget spreadsheet. Another ORTAB member wanted consistent page orientation
735 to be required and worth points.

736

737 The ORTAB wants the language asking for support letters to be more explicit. They thought that
738 language should be added to the application that requires current letters of support from potential
739 project beneficiaries other than the landowners. Some ORTAB members also wanted the youth
740 development question on the application to require a support letter to receive points. One ORTAB
741 member suggested that a completed sample application online would be helpful for applicants.

742

743 Steve Neel asked if the ORTAB was interested in seeing grant progress updates. There was general
744 agreement, especially for pictures of the final projects. The ORTAB also offered to visit RTP projects in
745 their areas and let Darcy Harris and Steve Neel know how they are coming along. The ORTAB asked if
746 any applicants were unable to spend all of their money for their projects. Neel mentioned that the
747 Snomads parking lot from a couple years ago wasn't completed due to inaction by the applicant. He also
748 said that the Friends of the Koponen Homestead couldn't get money in the time they needed for the
749 Koponen Homestead Trail project; Neel said that his jury duty and the new accounting system caused
750 delays.

751

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755

ORTAB Election

756
757

758 **Motion:**

759 Mike Sirofchuk nominated Jeff Budd to be the ORTAB chair person. Mickey Todd seconded.

760

761 **Vote:** (7 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

762

763 Jeff Budd is the ORTAB chairperson for the next two years.

764

765

766

-Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm-