ALASKA TRAILS
Building Partnerships, Building Trails

“Unclogging the Federal Outdoor Recreation Pipelines”

Brief Presentation & Discussion
Board of Forestry
Dec 8, 2020
1. Invest Strategically for Greatest Impact
   - Increase marketing and infrastructure to grow Fall/Winter/Spring activities
   - Outdoor adventure for the “Missing Middle”; huts, trail signs and maps, food, comfort
   - World class “long trails”
   - Gateway towns/ “Trail Towns”
   - “Must See” high volume outdoor recreation destinations; quiet places with little use....

2. Spread the Benefits - All Regions, All Kinds of Trail-based Activities
   - Bigger pie – for all sectors. independents, cruise, residents

3. Stabilize and Expand Resources for Trails & Outdoor Recreation
   - Maximum use & leverage of Federal Outdoor Recreation funds
   - Agency funding for operations and maintenance; partnerships to build and maintain trails
   - Solving the “Alaska Disconnect”

4. Streamline Authorizations for Use of Public land – regulatory relief
   - Improved, faster process for reserving trails on State general use land

5. Improve Marketing and User Information (take more advantage of what we have)

6. Political Power and Leadership
   - New partners; state-scale Outdoor Recreation leadership

7. Relentlessly Make The Case For All The Benefits Of Trails
   - better data, focused on economic & health impacts, visitors and residents

8. Include outdoor recreation in "working landscapes“ – e.g., on State Forests

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Focus on: Land Water Conservation Fund

LWCF Basics

• Federal LWCF delivered over $40 M for 350 Alaska outdoor recreation projects since 1965.
• LWCF is administered in Alaska by Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation (federal admin by NPS).
• Requires a 50-50 non-federal match – a one-to-one reimbursable federal subsidy!
• Available to State & local governments, to tribes.
• Can be used for a) outdoor rec. infrastructure,  b) acquisition of parks and open space (for example, Campbell Ck Greenbelt in Anchorage)
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Land Water Conservation Fund

What’s at Stake
Alaska’s potential allocation:
• FFY 2018 - $650,000
• FFY 2019 - $1,549,000
• FFY 2020 - $1,903,000

With passage of Great American Outdoors Act fall 2020:
• FFY 2021 (projected) $3.5M
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Land Water Conservation Fund

What’s Going On
Alaska’s potential allocation:
• FFY 2018 - $650,000 + $650,000 in hand match
  $1.3M lost due to lack of $75,000 to cover cost of State admin position

State has yet to accept receipt authority* for
• FFY 2019 - $1,549,000
• FFY 2020 - $1,903,000
• FFY 2021 (projected) $3,500,000

If we don’t address problems now, we’re at risk of loosing 2019-20 funds, and be even BIGGER losers when GAOA takes effect in FFY 2021

* Only state in the nation to leave this money on the table
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**LWCF Strategies & Solutions**

Work is in progress by Alaska Trails, key State Legislators, AK DOPOR, Congressional delegation, Alaska Outdoor Alliance:

**Federal Solutions**
- Reduce matching requirement
- Allow LWCF $ to cover in-state Admin costs
- Extend time frame
- Improve & simplify process

**In-State Solutions**

Work with Legislature & Governor:
- Secure admin cost (+/- 10% of grant)
- Secure State match (+/- 1/2 of total)
- Ensure local govs/tribes have chance to match LWCF $, even if State doesn’t

Work with all Stakeholders:
- Options to reduce admin costs?
- Options to consolidate processing of all federal outdoor recreation grants?
- Options to improve, simplify process?
- New sources of matching funds?

And one more thing.. **SCORP**
- By the end of 2021 Alaska must update the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- SCORP is required for continued receipt of LWCF, RTP, other fed funds
- Alaska needs to secure LWCF $ and matching contributions to produce a quality, partner-driven, regionally-based plan
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LWCF Action Plan

1. **Share the LWCF story**, first with the Governor and legislators, then with the general public.

2. Work for **reforms** at the federal level.

3. **Make the case** directly to AK Legislature & Governor: please secure administrative costs and state’s share of matching funds in 2021 budget - “Don’t leave money on the table!”

4. As quickly as possible, **hire DOPOR admin staff**, so Alaska can get “receipt authority” for LWCF $, and have at least the chance to secure required match.

5. Work to **simplify, improve and reduce costs** to run the LWCF & other federal outdoor recreation programs.
To,
Governor Mike Dunleavy
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 10876
Juneau, AK 99810

Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizen Advisory Board
85 Sterling Hwy, Suite 2
Homer, Alaska 99603

Date: 11-16-2020

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

The Great American Outdoor Act (GEOA), which provided funding for recreational programs nationwide was passed by the last Congress. This act provided matching funding to states and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) through a process that is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The GEOA was passed by the United States Congress, signed by the President, and allocated into Public Law No. 116-93 of 2019.

This bipartisan act makes crucially needed State Park funding available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

It has come to the attention of the Kachemak Bay Citizen’s Advisory Board that the State of Alaska does not at this time, have “cost authority”, meaning it is impossible for us to obtain the matched federal grant funding. This appears to be due to several reasons:

- The State of Alaska does not have a budget to provide for any “Match Funding”.
- There is at present, no funds to provide for a state administrator of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants programs.

When much of our political system is bogged down under the weight of political polarization, this piece of legislation with significant economic implications managed to pass both the House and the Senate on such a broad bipartisan basis. It enabled here, it has the potential to restore much needed funding for Alaska State Parks.

As the public turns to activities that provide some extra avenue to recreate, State Parks is becoming all the more important to Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizen Advisory Board
85 Sterling Hwy, Suite 2
Homer, Alaska 99603

Date: 11-16-2020

Alaska State Representative
Sarah Vance
Representative.Sarah.Vance@akleg.gov
For more info and ways to help

Trails Investment Strategy Website
• See sample DOPOR letter
• Appendix A. Summary of Federal and State funding opportunities

https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-investment-strategy

And stay in touch:
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