Board of Forestry Presentation April 3, 2019 Chris Beck

"Working Landscapes"
Integrating Outdoor Recreation with Resource Development

- 1. Context: Quick Overview of Statewide Trails Initiative
- 2. Working Landscapes Case Studies
- 3. Discussion: Relevance and Implications for Alaska, and for Alaska forest-designated lands

# Building a Stronger Alaskan Economy

# Alaska Trails Initiative

Alaska Trails Initiative Partners











# **Building** a **Stronger Alaskan Economy**

# Alaska **Trails Initiative**

Alaska Trails



"So much opportunity, so little infrastructure...."









Alaska has barely tapped our state's remarkable outdoor resources.

Because of this chronic underinvestment, we are missing our chance to build a stronger, more durable AK economy.



# How to get there... Statewide Trails Initiative

### **Actions and Products**

- Economic impact: today, future
- Coalition: users and user groups, agencies, businesses, organizations
- Trail projects inventory
- Feature projects
- Land and resource management strategies

### When will it be done?

- A continuing, open ended process
- But, initial draft product April 2019
  - New Kesugi Ken campground and Curry Ridge Trail;
  - Denali State Park "Build It and They Came"
  - Snowmachine couch with a view







# What Kinds of Users? "Big Tent" - Non Denominational



# Who's Involved? A Growing Band of Partners

### **Today's Core Team**

- Steve Cleary Alaska Trails
- Erik Boraas Juneau Trail Mix
- Erin Kirkland author, industry rep
- Wes Hoskins Mat Su Trails Foundation Stuart Leidner Alaska State Parks
- Lee Hart Confluence/Valdez Adventure Alliance
- Jessica Szelag Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm Nat'l Heritage Area
- Paul Clark NPS Rivers Trails Conservation Assistance
- Meredith Gutierrez; Beth Nordlund Alaska Park Foundation
- Chris Beck Alaska Trails/Agnew::Beck Consulting

**Paid Assistance**: Meg Pritchard – Alaska Fellow/Trails Initiative Fellow

### **Working with**

- Federal, state, local gov'ts
- Major land owners
- Native Corporations, Tribes
- Tourism organizations
- Non-profit foundations

- Lynne Brandon Sitka Trail Works
- Pat Pourchot AK Long Trails
- Wendy Sailors Alaska State Parks

- Diverse outdoor recreation user groups
- Economic development organizations
- Health organizations
- And others... (you!)

# What New Policies & Investments are Needed?

# Trails, huts, cabins/comfort

- "Missing middle" accessible adventure
- Handful of long trails

**Marketing** More robust, more helpful descriptions of AK trail opportunities

Information Radical ideas like trail signs

## Land management

- "Curating" outdoor recreation resources
- Support for "working landscapes"
- Stewarding our attractions, maintaining what makes Alaska <u>Alaska</u>





# **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

"The outdoor recreation industry is the sleeping giant of the US economy\*"







<sup>\*</sup>Outdoor Industry Association

# What Makes up the Outdoor Recreation Industry?

## **Remarkably Diverse**

- Activities: tours, food, lodging
- Manufacturing: (in AK) fat tire bikes, pack rafts, clothes...
- Equipment: sales of snow machines, bikes, hiking boots
- Support services: equipment repair, fuel sales, construction

# Why "Sleeping"?

- Fragmented, diffuse
- Not well documented (NAICS codes recently amended)
- Dismissed in AK as poorly paid, seasonal, too "green"

### THESE ACTIVITIES MAKE UP THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY



#### CAMPING

RV campsite Tent campsite Rustic lodge



### OFF-ROADING

ATV ROV Dune buggy 4x4 and Jeep



#### WHEEL SPORTS

Bicycling, paved road Bicycling, off-road Skateboarding



Recreational fly Recreational non-fly



### SNOW SPORTS

Cross-country skiing Downhill skiing Nordic skiing Snowboarding Snowmobiling Snowshoeing Telemark skiing



#### WATER SPORTS

Kayaking Rafting Canoeing Surfing Scuba diving Sailing Stand-up paddling Boating (cruising, sightseeing, wakeboarding, tubing, kneeboarding, waterskiing)



### HUNTING

Shotgun Rifle Bow

On-road

Off-road

MOTORCYCLING



#### TRAIL SPORTS

Day hiking on trail Backpacking Rock or ice climbina Running 3+ miles Horseback riding Mountaineering



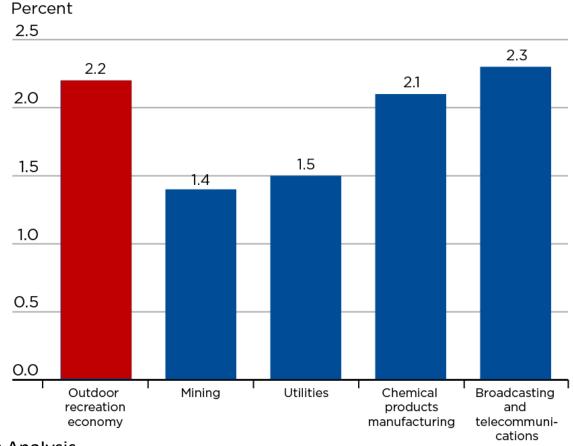
VIEWING

# **National Impact: \$412 Billion of US GDP**

# Equaling/exceeding other better known sectors

# Outdoor Recreation Economy as Percent of Nominal GDP Compared to Selected NAICS Industry Codes, 2016

Note: Hatcher Pass, McCarthy, the Iditarod Trail and other Alaskan outdoor recreation favorites exist only because of mining. This chart doesn't say no to mining, it just gives more reasons to say yes to outdoor recreation.



US Bureau of Economic Analysis

https://apps.bea.gov/scb/2018/09-september/0918-outdoor-recreation.htm

# Alaska Impact: Large (but not well documented)

# **Economic impacts of outdoor recreation in AK:**

Source: UAA Center for Economic Development, March 2019. Note: this <u>excludes</u> equipment purchases, and excludes travel less than 20 miles.

- \$3.2 billion in annual participant spending
- 38,100 direct, indirect and induced jobs

# Fiscal impacts of out of state visitors to Alaska

Source: Alaska DCCED, 2014.

https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/6/pub/TourismResearch/AVSP/Visitor%20Impacts%202016%20update%204\_15\_16.pdf

• \$187.8 million in State & Local gov't revenue

# What could expanded, smarter investments in outdoor recreation do for the AK economy?

# One More Day: "OMD"

Average length of stay for visitors to New Zealand – 19 days ...for out of state visitors to Alaska – 9.1 days

What if smart AK outdoor recreation investments lead to "OMD"?

- Total 2017 out-of-state visitor spending \$2.5 billion
- \$2.5 billion divided by 9.1 days = \$275 million/day
- Say we can only convince half... adds an extra \$137 million in spending in Alaska

Sources: Economic Impact of Alaska's Visitor Industry, 2017 - Nov 2018
<a href="https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/record-breaking-3-7-million-visitors-to-new-zealand">https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/record-breaking-3-7-million-visitors-to-new-zealand</a>
<a href="https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/dev/tourismdevelopment/tourismresearch.aspx">https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/dev/tourismdevelopment/tourismresearch.aspx</a>

# What could expanded, smarter investments in outdoor recreation do for the AK economy?

# Trail Users Spend More, Stay Longer

# How much do walking and hiking tourists spend on their trip in New Zealand?

Walking and hiking travellers spend significantly more than a typical visitor during their trip to New Zealand.

On average international tourists that participate in walking and hiking spend \$3,600 compared to the \$2,800 average spend of all holiday visitors. There is a significant high value segment in the walking and hiking sector with over 20% of international tourists saying they spend over \$5,000 on their visit to New Zealand.



### TRAIL INITIATIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Sustain and grow funding:
  - Leverage state/federal \$
  - Solutions to the "Alaska fiscal disconnect"
- Improved public land management
  - Working landscape partnerships
  - Regulatory reform better ways to reserve trails
  - Resource stewardship
- Maximize "bang for the buck spending"
  - Feature trails & "missing middle" opportunities
  - Marketing and Information
  - Destination towns
- Stronger State of AK Outdoor Recreation leadership

## **Working Landscapes:**

A path to greater value from State Lands, State Forests?

**Example: Trail Systems in Nelson, New Zealand** 



# Working Landscapes: New Zealand

Rotura - North Island's world Renown Mtn Bike Mecca



2.1km

3.7km

1.1km 1.2km 2.7km 1.2km 1.2km 1 5km





Mountain Bike Track Types  Choose a track that matches your skills, fitness and the experience you're after.  Most tracks are more difficult when wet. Avoid riding in the mud and rain.				
<b>@</b>	<b>Grade 2. Easy</b> Mostly flat with some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes.			
<b>A</b>	Grade 3. Intermediate Steep slopes and /or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and /or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the tracks outside edge.			
€.	Grade 4. Advanced A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.			
<u> </u>	<b>Grade 5. Expert</b> Technically challenging. Giant climbs, narrow track and numerous hazards including dangerous drop-offs, sharp corners and difficult obstacles. Expect walking and possibly bike carrying.			
<b>\$</b> \$	<b>Grade 6. Extreme</b> Downhill / free ride specific tracks. Extremely steep sections with large drop-offs and other unavoidable obstacles. May include man-made structures and jumps.			
0	<b>E-Bikes.</b> Pedal assist electric bikes (not exceeding 300W) are permitted in the forest. E-bike use is on dedicated mountain bike tracks and forestry roads			

Core	Out Back I			
Trail name	Grade	and the second section	Trail name	
Arepa Loop	3	2.3km	Ball and Chain	
As You Do	3	1.7km	BillyT	
B Rude Not 2	3	2.7km	Bunny Jugs 1	
Boulderdash	5	0.5km	Bunny Jugs 2	
Box of Birds	3/4	1km	Chestnut	
Challenge	3	1.2km	Chestnut Link	
Challenge Roadside	3	0.8km	Chop Suey	
Challenge Climb	3	0.4km	Corners	
Corridor	4	2km	Dammit Janet	
Creek Track	3	4.7km	Dragon's Tail	
Double Down	6	0.3km	Eagle vs Shark	
Down the Guts	4	0.3km	Frankenfurter	77.
Eastern Spice	5	1km	Frontal	
New Exit	3	1.3km	Lobotomy	2
Grinder	3-4	1.6km	G-Rock	4
Gunna Gotta	4	2.3km	Hatupatu	5-6
K2	5	1.3km	Hot X Buns	4
Katore Jumps	5	0.5km	Huckleberry Hound	4
Gids Loop	1	0.4km	Kataore	5
ion Trail	2	1.5km	Kung Fu Walrus	4
Mini DH	4	0.4km		4
Mokopuna	1	2.9km	Kung Fu Walrus Extn. Little Red	7
			Little Red	4

### **Forest Care Code**

The Whakarewarewa Forest is primarily a productive plantation forest where all facets of the forestry management cycle can be seen from time to time. However the forest is also a place where people can enjoy and explore the forest environment through various recreational activities. So that everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience, please respect the code below:



- Keep to signposted tracks for mountain biking only, walking only or horse riding only.
- Share with care is permitted on roads, multi-use or dual-use signposted trails.
- Beware of forestry vehicles using roads.
- Obey all forestry, workplace and event safety signage.
- Tracks and roads may be closed at any time for safety reasons.
- Keep dogs on lead or under control at all times. Check Redwoods website for on lead areas.
- Unauthorised track building/alterations is not permitted.
- Keep the forest clean remove rubbish.
- Respect our cultural heritage.
- Smoking is NOT permitted. NEVER light fires.









## Working Landscapes: New Zealand

Queen Charlotte Track – 75 K, Hotel to Hotel, 5 days

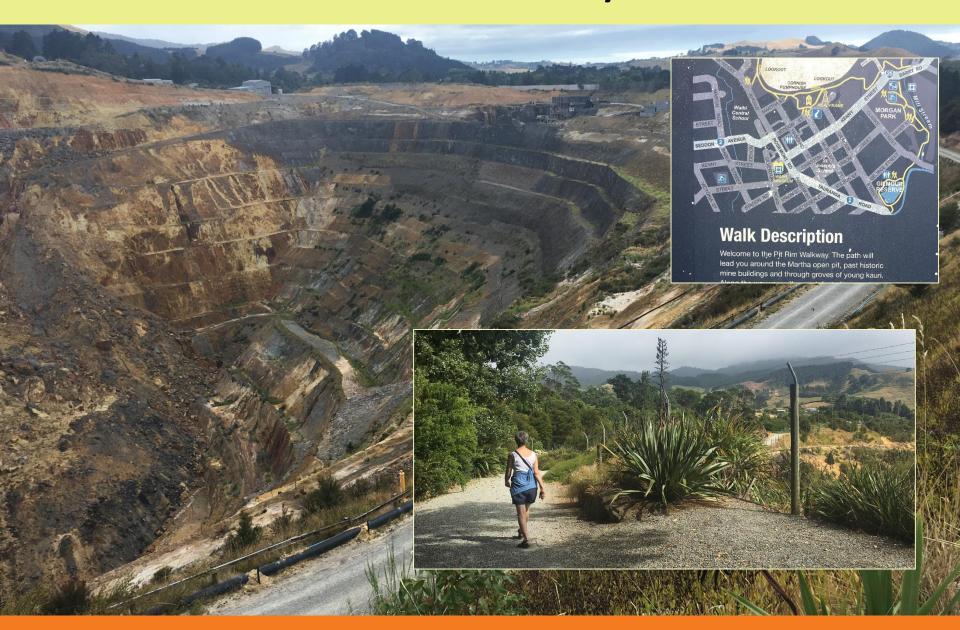


# Working Landscapes: Bend Oregon

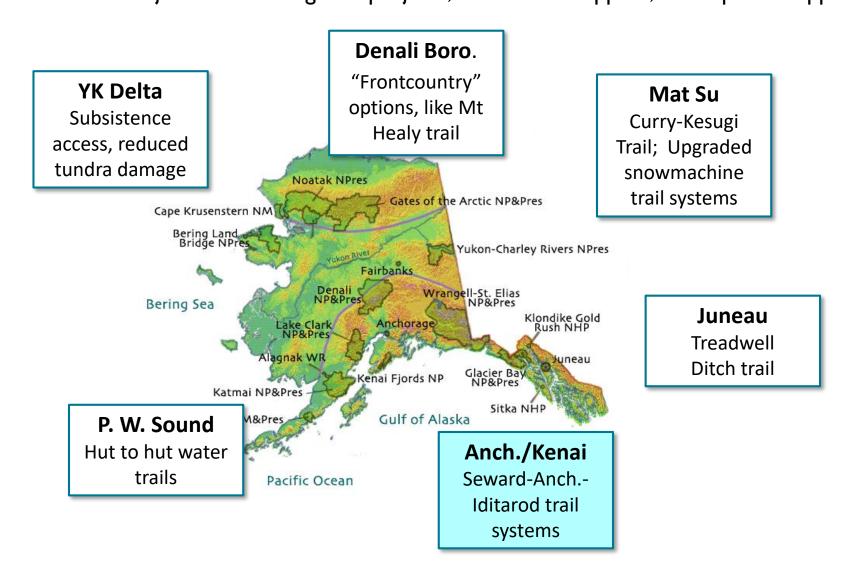
# Mountain Bike Trails/Active USFS Timber Harvest Area



# Working Landscapes: New Zealand Waihi Martha Pit – Pit Rim Walkway



"Feature Projects\*" strong economic benefits, a clear champion, bias towards multi-jurisdictional/regional projects, land owner support, broad public support...



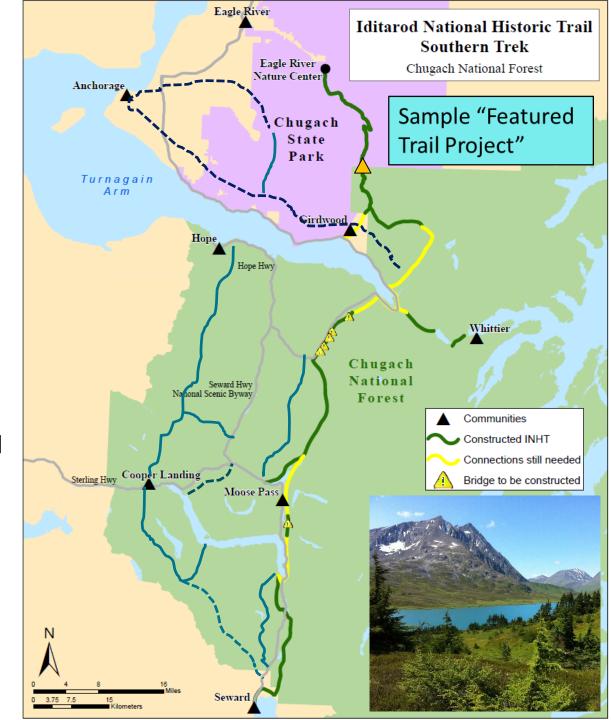


# PROJECT WITH MOMENTUM

- A complex of state and federal trails
- INHT Southern Trek: reconnected, 180-200 mile Long Trail
- The most accessible, populous and visited part of Alaska

### **RIPE MOMENT**

- A few bridges and planned segments are all that is left to reconnect the INHT
- In 2018, the INHT was recognized by the USFS as one of only 15 "trail maintenance priority areas in the US"

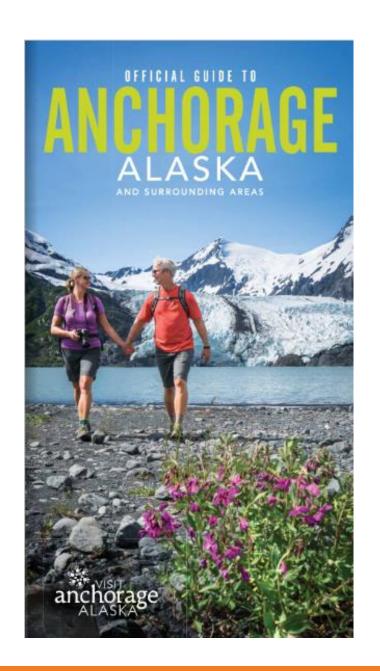


# We have a dream...

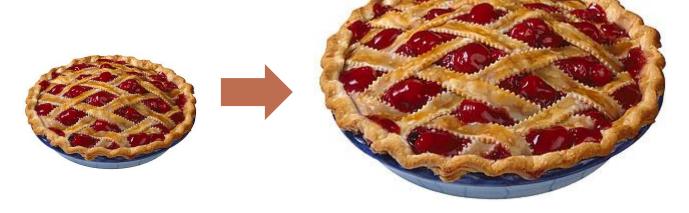
### What if...

- Alaska offered more inviting, easy, affordable ways to enjoy outdoor recreation experiences

   more of what we feature in our marketing material?
- Alaska's "poverty mentality" evolved to an "investment mentality"?



# We have a dream...



### What if...

- Local government and agency budgets for trails, signs, cabins, huts and effective land management doubled, tripled?
- A broad coalition worked together to maximize Alaska's outdoor recreation potential – tourism and outdoor recreation advocates, public land managers, development and conservation interests?

We're confident these actions would help build a bigger pie; a much stronger, more durable Alaskan economy.

# Your thoughts?

- Could we do more to align outdoor recreation and forestry interests in Alaska?
- Good examples today?
- Strategies & management policies for the future?
  - Specific promising locations and/or trails projects
  - Easier options to reserve trails
  - New approaches to include recreation and trails into timber harvest plans
  - Pioneer timber roads that double as snowmachine tracks
- How best to integrate rec/forestry goals and partners?

# We would like to get your views, ideas and participation!

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Another example of trails making it inviting to be active outside, connecting neighborhoods and connecting people