

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
Initiative Partners

“So much opportunity, so little infrastructure....”



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

**Because of this
chronic under-
investment, we are
missing our chance
to build a stronger,
more durable AK
economy.**



Prince William Sound's astonishing beauty:
seen up close by remarkably few people

How to get there...

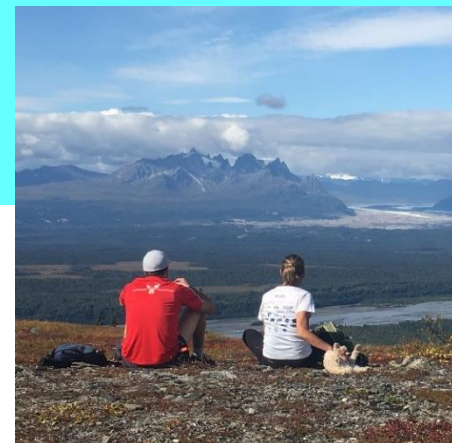
Statewide Trails Initiative

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

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
- 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 Alaska



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

“The outdoor recreation industry is the sleeping giant of the US economy*”



*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



FISHING

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, wake-
boarding, tubing,
kneeboarding,
waterskiing)



HUNTING

Shotgun
Rifle
Bow



TRAIL SPORTS

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



MOTORCYCLING

On-road
Off-road

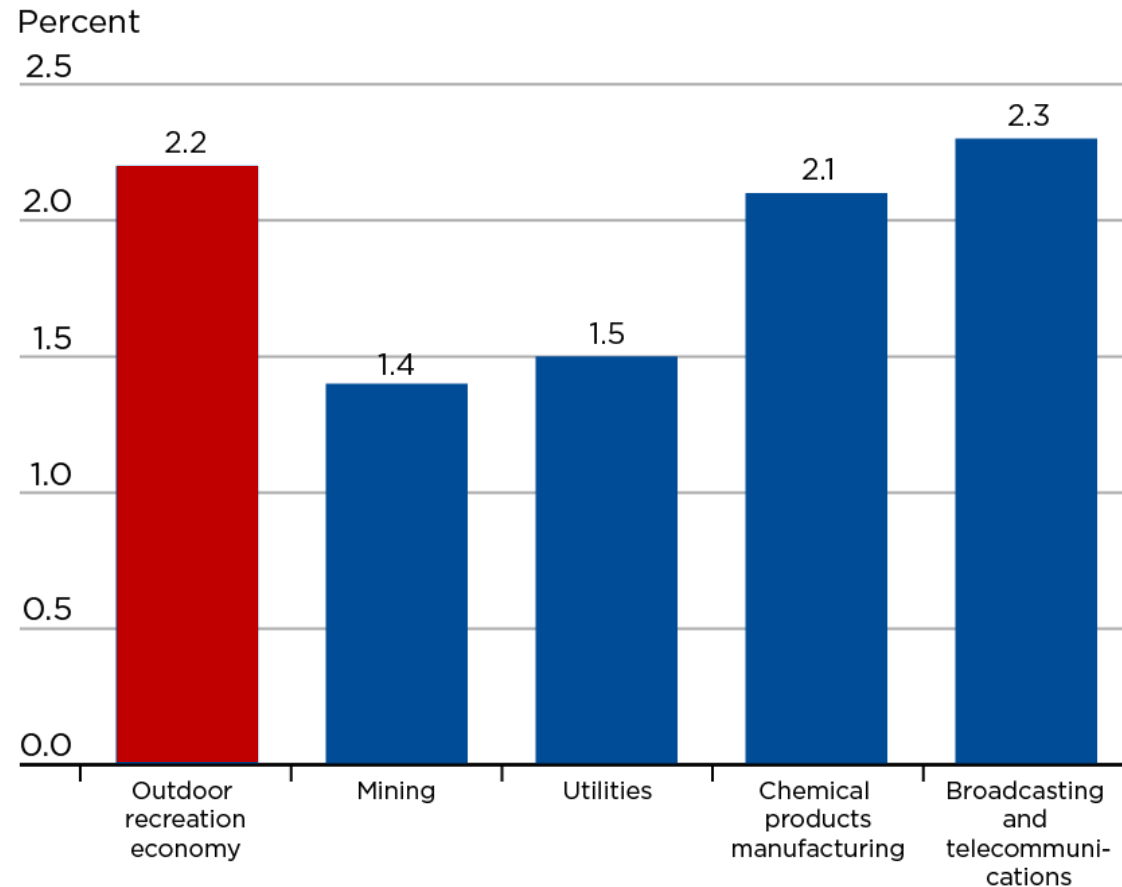


WILDLIFE VIEWING

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 excludes 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/Visitors%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

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/record-breaking-3-7-million-visitors-to-new-zealand>

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/dev/tourismdevelopment/tourismresearch.aspx>

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



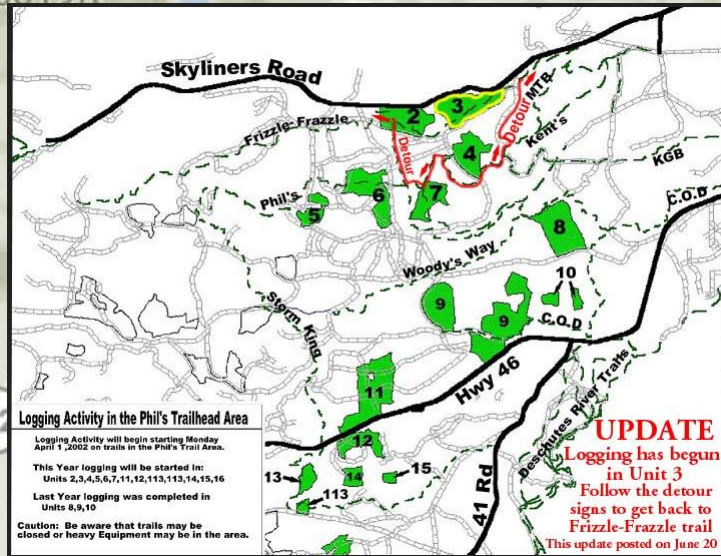
Working Landscapes: New Zealand

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



Working Landscapes: Bend Oregon

Mountain Bike Trails/Active USFS Timber Harvest Area



Deschutes
National Forest



97

US 97

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...

YK Delta

Subsistence access, reduced tundra damage

Denali Boro.

“Frontcountry” options, like Mt Healy trail

Mat Su

Curry-Kesugi Trail; Upgraded snowmachine trail systems

Juneau

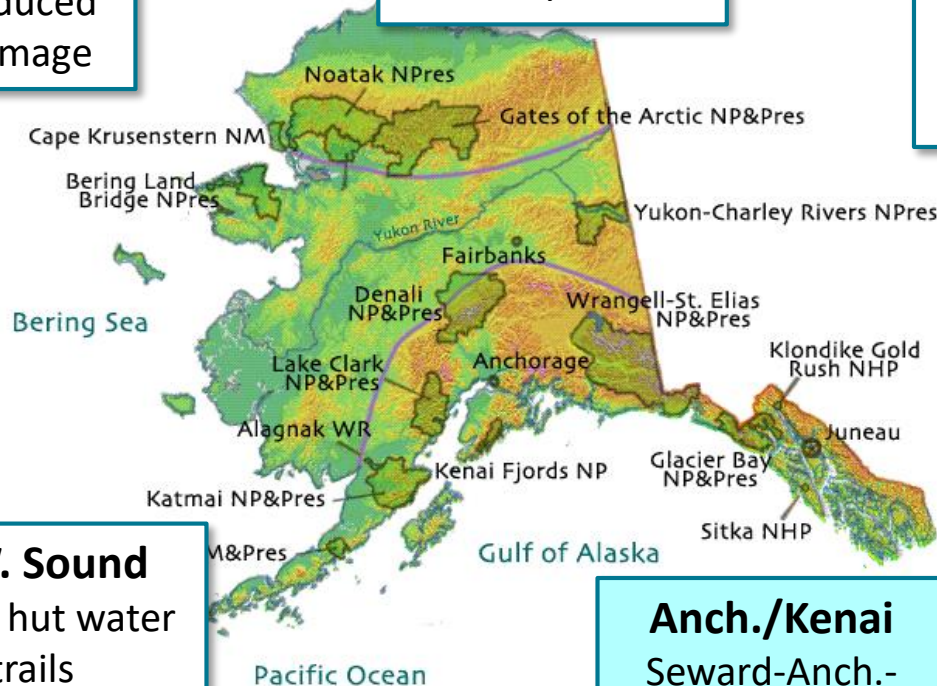
Treadwell Ditch trail

P. W. Sound

Hut to hut water trails

Anch./Kenai

Seward-Anch.-Iditarod trail systems



* preliminary, illustrative

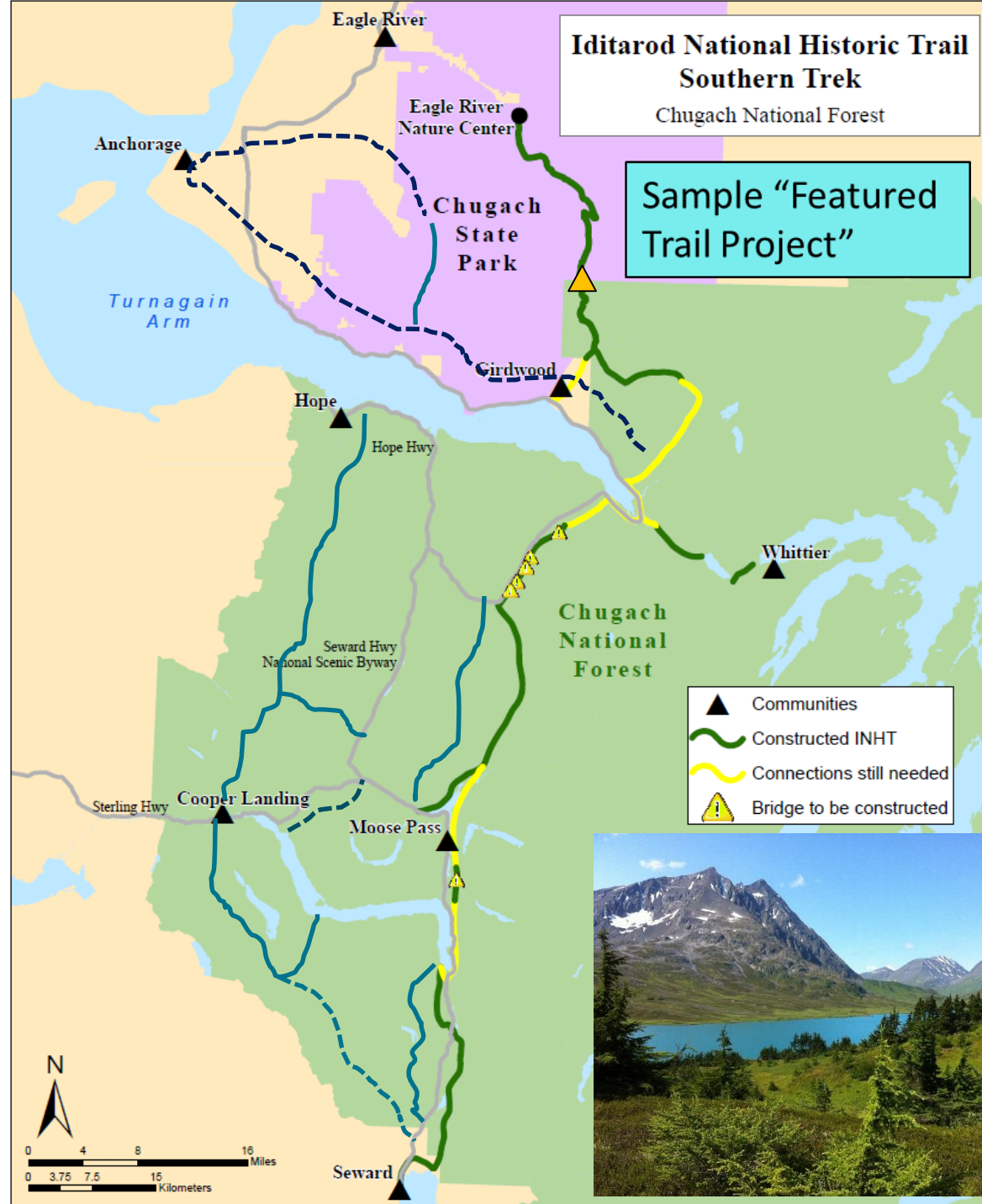


PROJECT WITH MOMENTUM

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

RIPE MOMENT

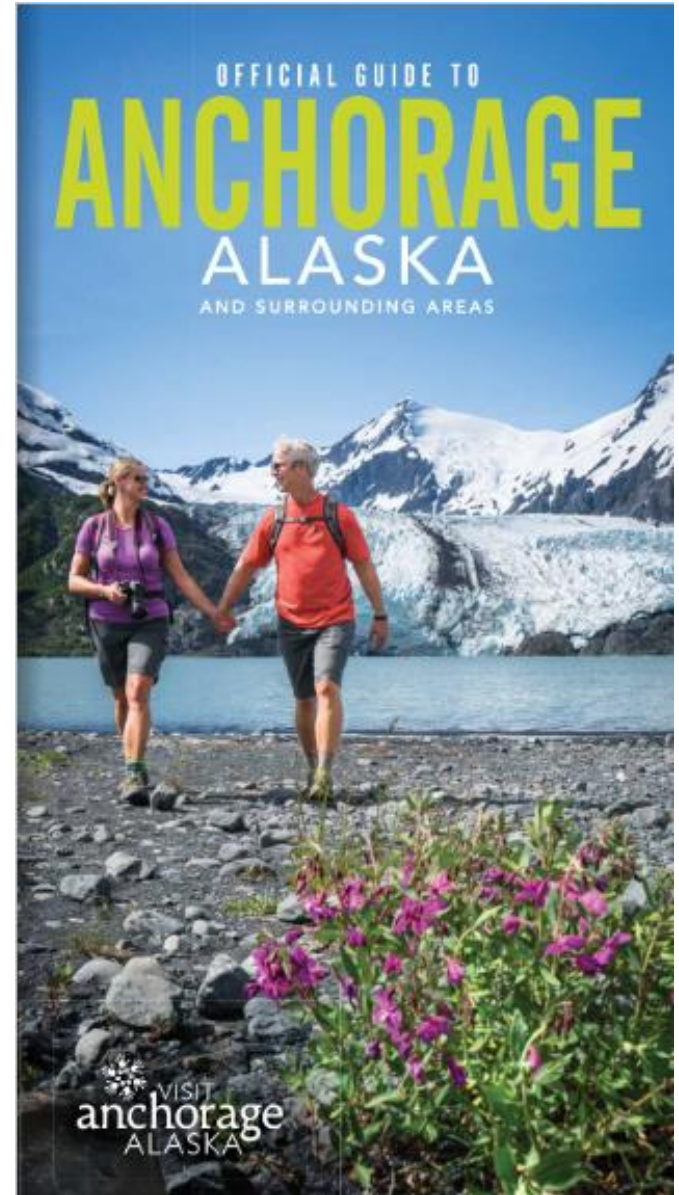
- A few bridges and planned segments are all that is left to reconnect the INHT
- In 2018, the INHT was recognized by the USFS as one of only 15 “trail maintenance priority areas in the US”



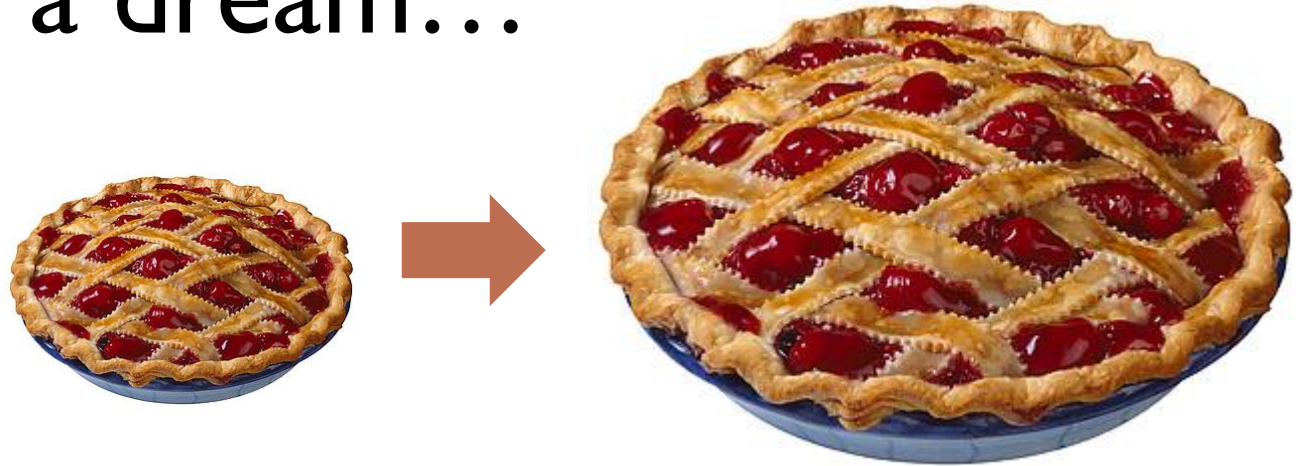
We have a dream...

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!

Chris Beck

chris@agnewbeck.com

Steve Cleary

steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org

Erik Boraas

erik@juneautrails.org



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