

**Board of Forestry Presentation
Feb 23, 2021 Chris Beck**

**“Working Landscapes”
Integrating Resource
Development and Outdoor
Recreation**

- 1. Background: Alaska Trails Initiative & Alaska Long Trail**
- 2. Integrating Timber and Trails**
- 3. General Obligation Bond**
- 4. Nenana-Fairbanks Forestry/ Recreation Roads**

**Building a
Stronger
Alaskan
Economy**

**Alaska
Trails
Initiative**



Alaska Trails Initiative

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
- To better attract and hold residents and businesses
- To make it easier for Alaska residents to be active, healthy, happy outside



Investing in trails and outdoor recreation infrastructure is one of the best ways to rebuild Alaska's 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**

If just half of a typical year' out of state visitors spend one more day in Alaska the result is an extra **\$137 million in-state spending**



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>

Investments for “One More Day”

Trails, Huts, Cabins, Access

- “Missing middle” of the outdoor rec spectrum
- Wide range of types of trails
- **World class “long trail”**

Better Marketing

- Radical ideas like maps, trail signs

Wayfinding Information

- Radical ideas like maps, trail signs

Land management

- Regional planning for smart investments
- Adequate agency Out. Rec. operating budgets
- **Support for “working landscapes”**



Working Landscapes:

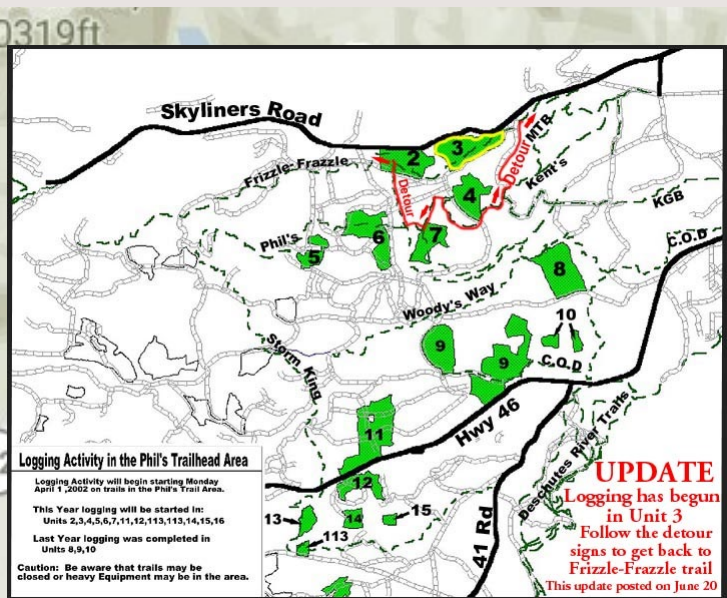
A path to greater value from State Lands, State Forests

Example: Trail Systems in Nelson, New Zealand



Working Landscapes: Bend Oregon

Mountain Bike Trails/Active USFS Timber Harvest Area



Deschutes National Forest



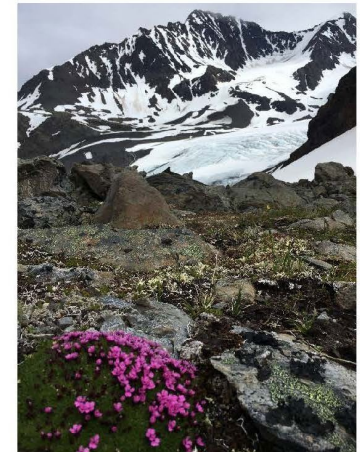
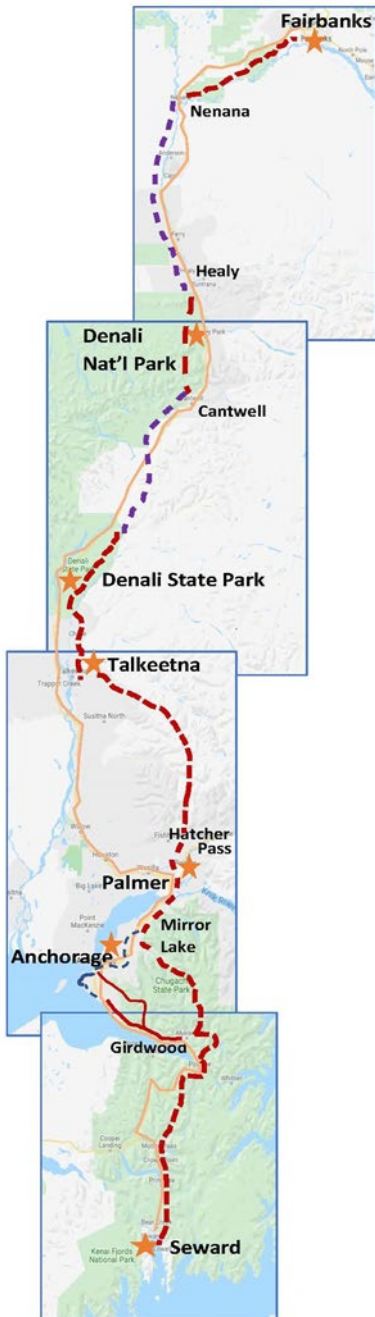
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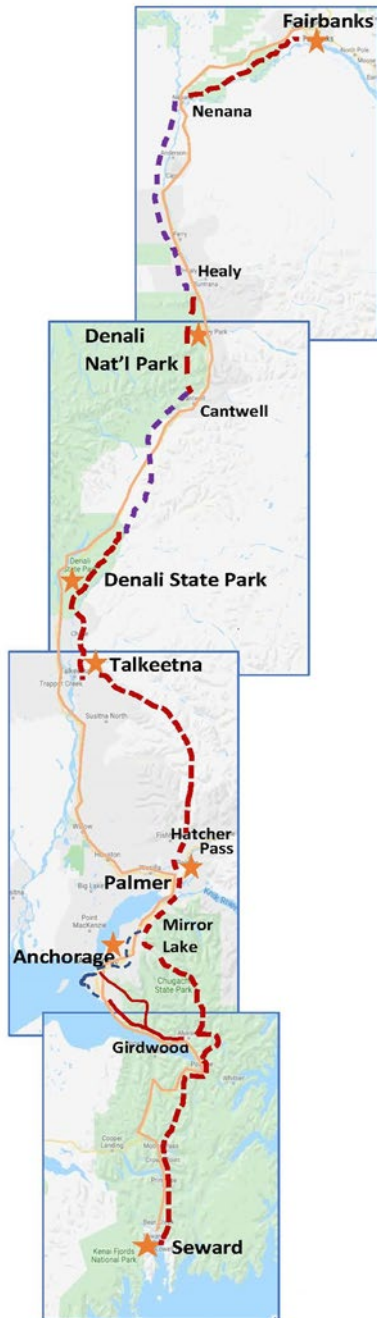
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WHY AN ALASKA “LONG TRAIL”?

Long Trails are *magic* – creating more value than the sum of their parts. Alaska is way overdue in stitching together a world class long trail, in the spirit of the Pacific Crest & Continental Divide Trails in the US, and similar trails in Portugal, New Zealand, Japan, Iceland, Africa...

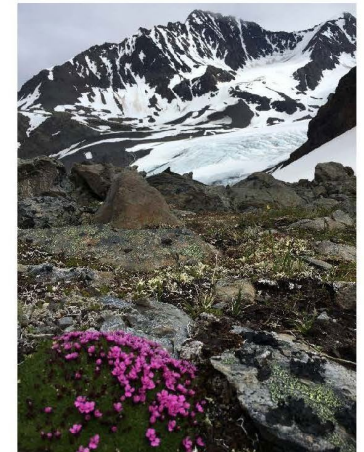
- In 50 years, 30,000 have hiked the full Appalachian Trail; Three million visitors hike a portion of the trail each year.
- 100% Increase in growth in John Muir Trail Park Service permits 2011 to 2015.
- Growing Interest: hiking was the fastest growing activity for independent and cruise out of state travelers from 2011-2016.





WHY FAIRBANKS TO SEWARD?

- Momentum & landowner support
- Economic Impact – near to communities.
- Manageable Costs – many portions already exist
- “Goldilocks Factor” – wild but not too wild
- Wow Factor – spectacular country
- Flexible – options for a 4-season/multi-user route



Press Release: Dunleavy Introduces Job Creating Infrastructure Bond

February 5, 2021 (Anchorage, AK) – Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy today introduced a job-creating \$356 million infrastructure proposal – [Senate Bill 74](#) – the first statewide bond proposal in nearly 10 years. Upon passage by the Legislature, the general obligation bond will go to a vote of the people.

“This statewide bond package is essential to **stabilizing our economy and putting Alaskans back to work following the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic,**” said **Governor Dunleavy**. Not only will this proposal create jobs, it will improve critical infrastructure for all Alaskans.”

The proposal totals \$356,405,952 and leverages a federal match of \$1,003,471,000. Projects of interest included in the general obligation bond include:

\$8.5M to West Susitna Road Access project

\$25M to School Major Maintenance Grant Fund

\$19.5M to Alaska Vocational Technical Center upgrades

\$12M to Alaska Public Safety Communication Services System upgrades

\$13.2M to Fairbanks to Seward Multi-Use Recreation Trail Construction

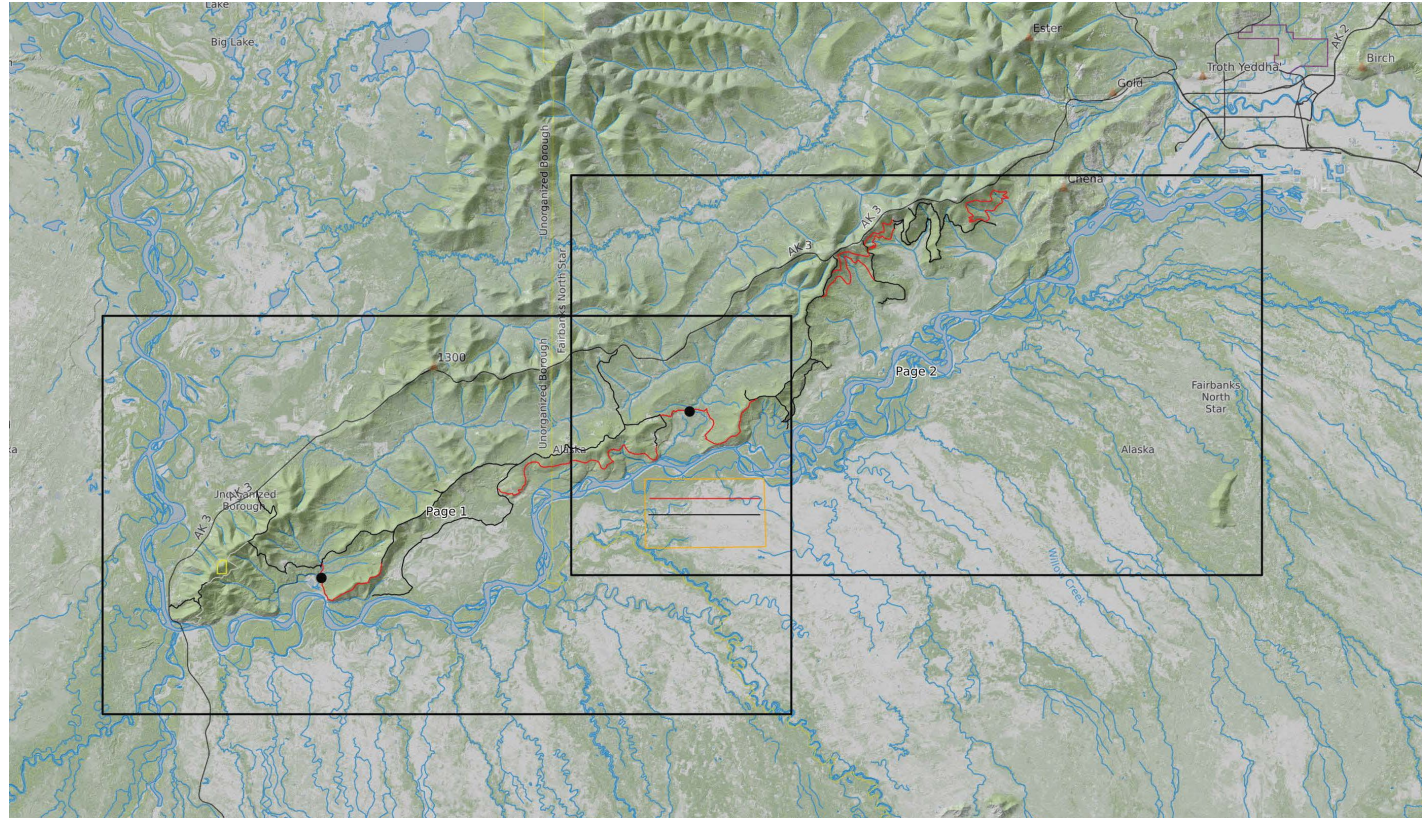
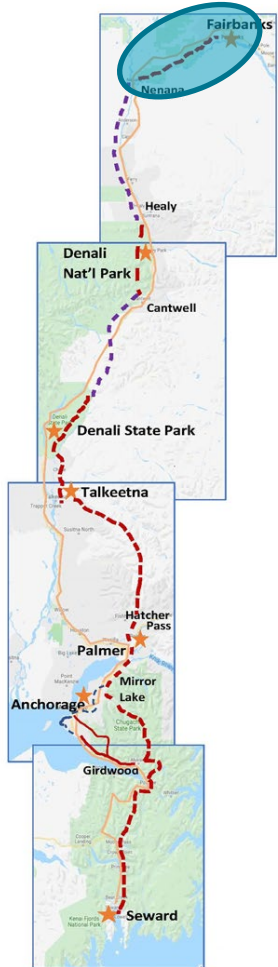
\$20M to Statewide Firebreak Construction Program

And other projects...

<https://gov.alaska.gov/newsroom/2021/02/05/dunleavy-introduces-job-creating-infrastructure-bond/>

Nenana – Fairbanks Multipurpose Roads Project

Northern Segment of the Alaska Long Trail



Nenana – Fairbanks Multipurpose Roads Project

Northern Segment of the Alaska Long Trail

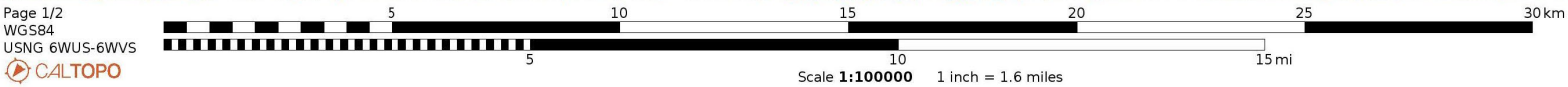
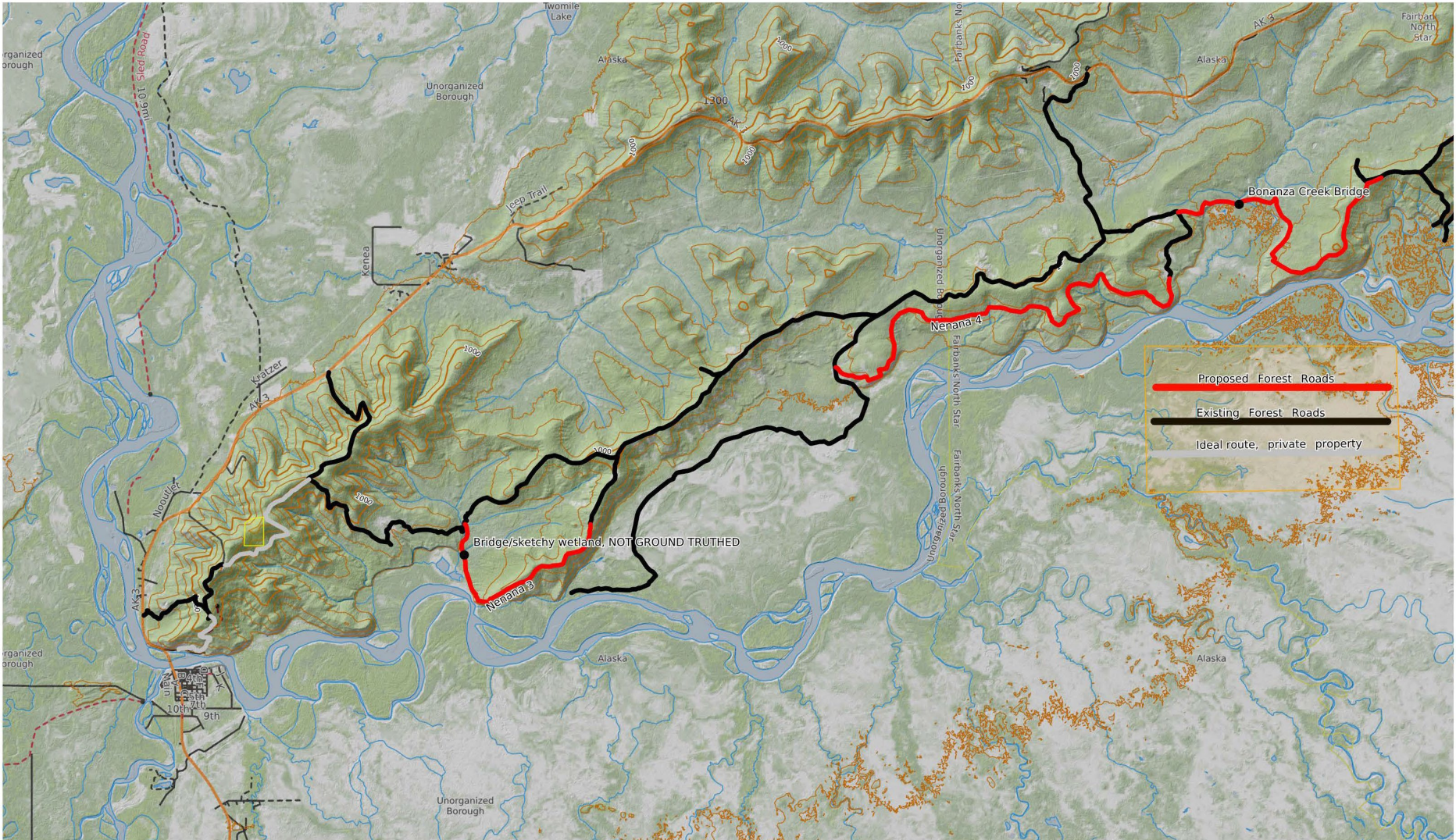
Project Objectives

- 37 new miles of forestry roads through TVSF
- Connects and expands the current road system
- Completes a motorized/non-motorized trail link to the Parks Highway near Nenana, including two looped sections of road.

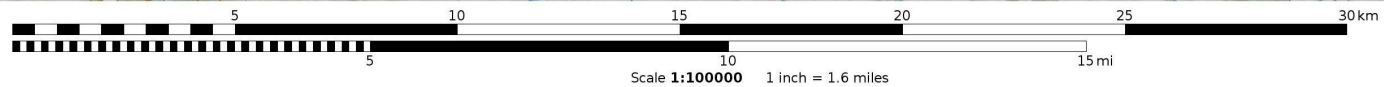
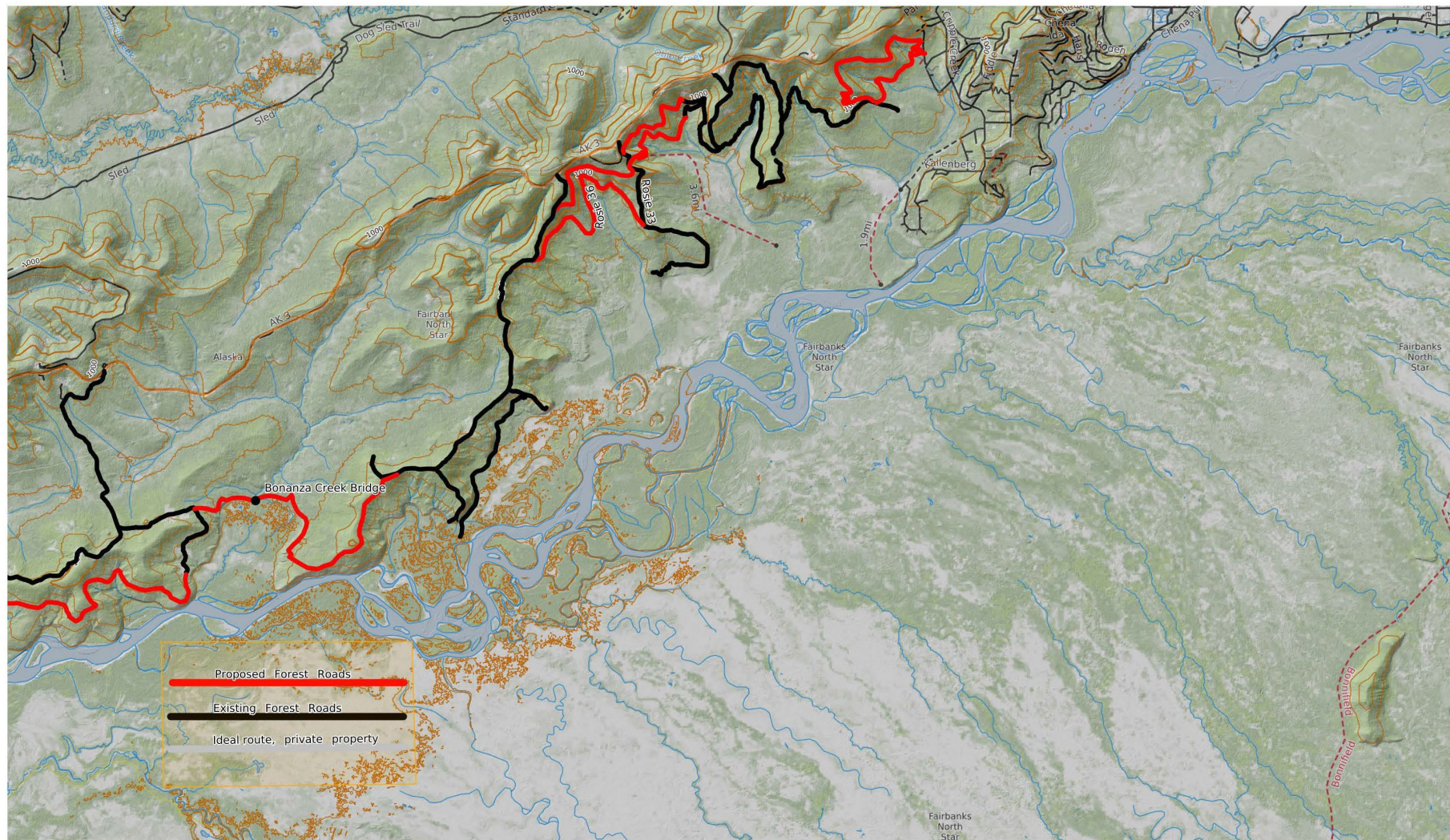
Project Benefits - Doubles Road Investment Value

- Opens up additional locations for timber harvest
- Provides excellent recreation opportunities for day-trip recreationists who are returning to their starting point in Fairbanks or Nenana,
- Creates on key section of the Alaska Long Trail
- Creates safe alternative transportation routes for recreational travel during active timber harvest,

West Side



East Side



Nenana – Fairbanks Multipurpose Roads Project

Northern Segment of the Alaska Long Trail

Project Details and Budget

- 37 miles of unpaved forestry roads (12' wide, naturally surfaced, full bench, with 3% outsloping) x \$60,000 per mile = \$2,220,000
- 2 bridges @ \$150,000 ea = \$300,000 (Bridges will be for multi-use recreation, not for logging trucks. Trucks can access timber via other roads directly from the Parks Hwy.)
- Design and environmental review: \$100,000
- Project oversight and management (10%): \$262,000
- Total: \$2,882,000

AK Trails & Partners

Strategies to Approve the GO Bond

1. Persuasive, Accurate Support Materials

- “One Pager” – overview of Long Trail mission, vision, benefits, projects –
- Project Descriptions by Region/Legislative District – spread the benefits

2. Legislative Outreach

- Long Trail team contacts with local legislators
- Presentations to Legislative committees

3. Partner Outreach –

- Requests to partners – **advisory boards and commissions**, tourism organizations, local governments, economic development organizations, trail users – to express support to the Legislature



The Alaska Trail Stewards Program is looking for projects and for volunteers for summer '21

The progress we've made thus far, and the ambitious goals we've set for this coming year, are only achievable through the support and engagement of our many partners ..

Thanks!

Stay in touch/get involved

Trails Initiative: **share your ideas!**
www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-initiative



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