

CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

Hybrid Electronic Microsoft Teams, 5:00 pm
BP Energy Center

Agenda for November 11, 2025

Regular meeting #9

1. Call to Order: 5:00 pm

2. Roll Call:

- a. Present:** Mark Miner, Ted Phelps (tardy, online), Gabbie Jordan, Joe Hackenmueller, Kyle Shedd, Alison Smith, Tyndall Ellis, Rob Clark, Sarah Brey, Kristin Vantrease, Irene Turletes
- b. Excused:** Gus Gustafson
- c. Absent:** Clark Saunders
- d. Staff:** Justin Dipaola-Allen (Superintendent), Ella Fitzwater
- e. Other guests present:** Rich Greenfield (Peters Creek), Shaun Sexton (regular guest),

3. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

- a.** No changes. Motioned/seconded/approved.

4. Changes to Agenda and Approval:

- a.** Tyndall moved to postpone Rendezvous Ridge (item 6a) to next meeting to allow Trails Committee an opportunity to meet and discuss. Will be on December's meeting agenda. Seconded by Mark.
- b.** Tyndall moved to add New Business item of non-CAB committee members and ex-officio procedures and status. Now item 7b. Seconded by Gabbie.

5. Public Comments:

- a.** Rich Greenfield (Peters Creek): no affiliation with an organization but has been collecting comments for Peter's Creek trail and has copies of comments.
- b.** Shaun Sexton (regular guest): no comments or affiliation.
- c.** Bill Sherwonit (regular guest): has comments about Rendezvous Ridge agenda item 6a and wanted to remind the CAB of Justin's previous comment about pausing new projects in the park until current trails and facilities can be maintained. Bill also indicated interest in being named as an ex-officio member of the Trails and/or Wildlife Committee and would like more information on the CAB's historical letters of support for CMBR (Chugach Mountain Bike Riders) proposals.
- d.** Casey Durand (regular guest): works with local businesses during the holiday season and has approached some owners about partnerships with the CSP and CPF (Chugach Park Fund). For example, Fasteners & Fire Equipment, Inc. has added Ella to a purchase account and are able to decrease the cost of her purchases for the park, the cost difference will be made up by Casey. More park staff can be added to the account. He is also interested in the conversation about agenda item 7b.
- e.** Joe Bear (no affiliation): here to observe.
- f.** Lee (from Eagle River and representing the South Fork Community Council): Voiced concern about CMBR having too much input to the public process and is uncomfortable that Will Taygan may be compensated for his role as Executive Director of the

organization. The CAB clarified his misconception that CMBR is using public park funds for bike-specific CMBR work within the park (they are not). Irene and Tyndall also clarified that privately-donated CPF funds are primarily distributed to hiking trails. Lee admitted that he does not have specific information on the financials of CMBR.

- g. Kyle McLaughlin (no affiliation): here to observe.
- h. Jonathan Strong (Anchorage resident, park user, online): no comment, here to observe.
- i. Judy Caminer (Chugach Park Fund, online): no comment.

6. Old Business:

- a. Rendezvous Ridge and Powerline Pass Reroute Concepts (Trails Committee)
 - i. Moved to next meeting
- b. Nominations Update (Tyndall)
 - i. Gus is following up with some individuals to round out open positions on the CAB.
 - ii. The Nominations Committee will probably wait until the new year in January to bring new members on board.
- c. CASA Update (Gabby)
 - i. Bill Britt is now a member of the municipality's new CASA board. They haven't full organized to meet yet.
 - ii. No updates from Tyndall's inquiry to the ad-hoc committee in mid-October. There was a proposal to amend the bond to be for construction funding instead of planning funding for Basher Trailhead.
 - iii. There is one more opportunity to comment at the Assembly meetings (Tuesday, November 18). The 6-year capital improvement plan is still up for discussion.
 - iv. Gabbie speculated that the municipality is waiting until after the 2026 budget is finalized to fully organize their new CASA board.
 - v. If CAB members have an opportunity to attend the assembly meeting, please do so as individuals, not as CAB representation as there hasn't been an opportunity for the CAB to have an official position.
- d. AO360 Update (Justin)
 - i. Comment period closed on October 31. This process is being run through the Director's office, not CSP.
 - ii. Justin suspects the Director's office will compile all comments and changes affecting CSP, at which time he will update us on the status.

7. New Business:

- a. Term Expiration: Board Member Renewal Interest (Tyndall)
 - i. Gus: yes
 - ii. Joe: yes
 - iii. Mark: yes
 - iv. Ted: work schedule will not allow him to continue his position after this term.
 - v. Gabbie: yes
 - vi. Two positions will be open at the end of the year.
- b. Non-CAB committee membership

- i. Note: Gus, Chair of the Nomination Committee, is not present for the conversation.
- ii. How can we better incorporate members of the public into committee meetings? Committees don't regularly meet and there are only a few per year.
- iii. The process outlined in the Bylaws to become an ex-officio member for non-CAB members requires approval from the Director, which dissuades interest. If someone wants to be a member of the committee, is there a less formal way to join?
- iv. Examples of ex-officio members who are experts in their field: Assemblypersons, DNR representatives.
- v. Ultimately, members of the public are more than welcome to join on committees but are non-voting.
- vi. Kyle voiced concerned about the committees ballooning to an unreasonable size. Tyndall mirrored sentiment that committee work sessions are normally very focused on a specific project.
- vii. Mark pointed out that guests who attend meetings are the ones who are by default being included, and it shouldn't be the board's responsibility to reach out and include non-CAB members.
- viii. Justin offered to post committee reports on public notice as well. Irene cautioned that the public notice isn't a requirement of committees and that this could easily balloon into more of a burden for park staff.
- ix. Bill pointed out that meetings are hard to put together and trying to find a time for everyone to sit down and discuss can balloon into an impossible task. We should be cautious of putting a burden on people to work more.
- x. Tyndall emphasized we are struggling to get agendas out ahead of time for even normal board meetings and we have a lot of work to do to get organized. The CAB has taken on more responsibilities over the years, such as the agenda and minutes. These tasks used to be done by staff, now they're done by board members.
- xi. Kyle cautioned creating a new status for unofficial members and prefers to follow the protocol in the bylaws. Irene agreed.
- xii. Gabbie asked about whether special interest members need to have expert advice, Sarah referenced the bylaws and clarified that non-CAB members can be *either* of the requirements, and their qualifications do not need to meet *all* requirements.
- xiii. Joe asked if ex-officio members need to be nominated by a member of the board or can they self-nominate? The process allows for one to lead to the other, similar to CAB members applying and then being recommended by the Nomination Committee.
- xiv. Sarah suggested having an earlier prepared and distributed agenda and whether we can include the public in committee reports. For the public to participate, they first need to be well versed in the topics. During committee updates, we can feel free to pull guests in during committee updates.
- xv. Tyndall suggested this topic be deferred to the Nomination Committee but doesn't want to volunteer Gus for something when he isn't present.
- xvi. Clark recommended modifying the nomination form to accommodate these types of non-voting membership roles.
- xvii. Irene suggested tabling this discussion and wants to research what other CABs are doing and whether they have a standard operating procedure

to help guide us. This will also give Gus an opportunity to participate in the conversation.

- xviii. The CAB thanked Bill S. for his patience about the role and Shaun encouraged us to foster public participation as those are the first three directives of CAB members according to the Director's Purpose and Intent document.
- xix. Bill S. mentioned that when he was a CAB member there were members of the public on committees and clarified that the ex-officio option was presented to him at the last meeting, which is why this discussion came up. He would like to participate on the Trails Committee and it's current agenda of the Rendezvous Ridge reroute. He wants to see the process, not influence it.
- xx. Rich Greenfield asked if there could be transparency around posting public comments for notice online. Justin said there's no forum for posting comments publicly, we will continue to attach them to the minutes every month.
- xxi. Tyndall moved to include Bill S on the Trails Committee for one month. Kyle seconded. Approved.

8. CSP Staff Report: Justin Dipaola-Allen, Ella Fitzwater

a. Ella:

- i. First snowfall, snowplow guys were busy.
- ii. Seasonal closures: Bird Ridge, McHugh Upper.
- iii. Reflective tape added on Canyon Road.
- iv. Staff conducted a trash pickup, brushed back multiple trailhead areas, logged out portions of Peter Creek Trail, and staged snow equipment (sanding, snowblowers, etc) around the park.
- v. 3 new Public Use Cabins have been tested and are very warm.
- vi. Future Leaders Summit: More park techs have been conducting leadership training.
- vii. Ella completed annual performance evaluations for staff members, and everyone has been doing great work in the park.
- viii. Last week Ella helped facilitate park operations training for all state park staff in Alaska.

b. Justin:

- i. Future Leaders Summit: participants are selected by the commissioner; this program is led by DPOR. It's a very high honor to be accepted: Ella and Spencer were selected for 18 days of training, where they explored lots of leadership skills. Last year, Justin co-facilitated the program and this year he is a main facilitator.
- ii. Winter has arrived and the park is busy getting ready for that.

c. Ranger report:

- i. No rangers present today but will probably attend in December.
- ii. Rangers responded to an injury (broken ankle) on Eklutna Lakeside Trail along with the Fire Department. The individual tried self-rescuing, ultimately a Good Samaritan helped them out safely.

- iii. Albert Loop Trail at the ERNC is officially back open as of today and they've been monitoring it with game cameras.
 - iv. Illegal camping on Seward Highway, participants fined with using the park without paying.
 - v. Rangers responded to a triple fatality car crash at Portage.
 - vi. Rangers assisted APD to locate a prowler.
 - vii. Various boating control, driver safety issues, and hunting checks have occurred.
 - viii. Rangers conducted Hunter Pass familiarization before snowfall.
 - ix. Camper that was dumped in the park has still no leads.
 - x. Search and rescue on Flat Top: AMRG was doing rescue training on that site at the same time. Quickest rescue ever.
 - xi. During the past month, citations have been issued for: violating park closure, failure to pay fees, camping in undesignated area, and failure to present insurance.
 - xii. Special hunts in the park:
 - 1. RM435 for Upper Ship Creek: any bull rifle hunt closed on November 5th because the quota was taken.
 - 2. DM 466 for McHugh: antlerless moose hunt, 3 harvested in the week of November 6th. That hunt is approximately half over.
 - 3. DM467 for McHugh: antlerless moose issued, 5 permits issued but no additional information on quota.
 - 4. Both DM466 and DM467 are muzzle loader or shotgun only.
- d. Questions for Staff:
 - i. Mark asked for clarification on trail closures for fat bikes. Justin confirmed Middle Fork will be opened on November 15th for fat biking only. If signs can be put back up that would be appreciated, as STA has given misinformation about the trail being open to all uses since the signs are gone.
 - ii. Tyndall asked if there are any updates on citations for Arctic Valley users on military land, as there was a user cited by the military. Justin had no updates but encouraged everyone to get download the app (JBER Connect) because the registration is only \$10/year and confirmed if users don't have the permit they'll be cited. The Arctic Valley boundary is right at the edge of their parking lot.
 - iii. Shaun presented letters and community correspondence to Justin, which included some items that the CAB hasn't seen. Gabbie will attach to minutes and include CAB letters of support for December 2024 for clarification.

9. Committee Reports:

- a. Access (Bill): Access to state parks is mostly happening within the municipality, not the state. Gave a background on CASA and gave an update on the municipality's proposed fines to landowners who block access to public easements (for example, Stewart Trailhead).
- b. Budget (Tyndall): None.
- c. Nomination (Gus): None.
- d. Seward Highway Design (): None.
- e. Trails (Gabrielle): Committee will meet before December CAB meeting and consider all the input from the public.

- f. Chugach Park Fund (Kyle): had meeting with Justin on October 20th to review the work done this last year. Also 6 volunteer events. Confirmed 2026 priorities and are awaiting cost estimates. 2026 will focus on Lost Cabin Trail and Wolverine Ski Bowl. Justin described the thought process: Prospect Heights was paved last year, Basher is under study and hopeful that the lot will be expanded, and they wish to provide trail improvements in the places where access has been improved. There will be six volunteer events next year, Justin encourages the volunteer events to be on trails that have been recently improved to keep them well-maintained for as long as possible. He is also hoping for one at Falls Creek, but that is logistically challenging because volunteers may be exhausted from the hike in before they start working. 2027 CPF goal: paid crew for Wolverine, 2028 is Near Point. CPF is co-hosting Trail Trails on March 17th.
 - g. Wildlife (Gus): Gabbie updated for Gus: all is quiet. Corey Stantorf will be attending January's meeting and presenting on the collaboration between CSP and ADF&G. Justin explained that CSP manages the land within the park, ADF&G manages the fish and wildlife, and DOT manages public roads. CSP is unique in this, as Denali, for example, doesn't have that resource.
 - h. Planning (): None.
 - i. Outreach (Rob): None.
 - j. Ram Valley (Rob): None.
2. Alison was encouraged to reach out to committee chairs. If no chair for her desired committee, she can let Irene know by next meeting.

10. Adjournment: Motioned/seconded by Bill/Tyndall

25043 Schaff Drive
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November 4, 2025

Chugach State Park
Citizen Advisory Board
C/o Justin Dipaola-Allen
Chugach Region Superintendent
18620 Seward Highway
Anchorage, Alaska 99516

Certified Mail # 9589 0710 5270 3286 7919 42

Gentlemen and Ladies,

The following is a summary of my findings resulting from a review of the Rendezvous Ridge Concept Trail Plan presented by Will Taygen, dba Chugach Mountain Bike Riders, at the October meeting of the Chugach State Park (CSP) Citizen Advisor Board (CAB).

Background

- The plan begins by referencing the Muktuk Marston Trail (MMT) and Hunter Pass Trail and the popularity of those trails. It is silent on the public outcry from local residents that were surprised by the way those trails came to be constructed.
- It is stated that the CSP CAB "approved" the use of the MMT for biking. Statutory authority for such approval is not cited. It may not exist.
- The preliminary routing is shown in plan view developed using Cal Topo. A representative of a known trail construction company is reported to have walked "the concept route areas". Apparently, the outcome of that effort is that there remains a level of uncertainty about the lines being buildable. How close did the walk follow the proposed routing?
- A profile view of the routing using Cal Topo or other means is excluded from the plan. A legend on the plan view would be useful.
- A construction budget recommendation is introduced in the proposed plan and said to be intended for use in making applications for grants, public grants presumably.

CSP TMP

- The use of the existing Rendezvous Ridge trail is said to be included in the proposal. This ridge trail has been very popular as a hiking venue for decades. Displacement of traditional users concerned about the very real potential for uncomfortable encounters with renegade bikers is not satisfactorily addressed.

Technical Specifications

- “Generally recommended recommendations” are not typically considered as final project specifications.
- The document is silent on revegetation of disturbed land. Revegetation has been lacking recently on trail construction/renovation projects. Revegetation if specified in State planning documents. Without revegetation, trail sustainability is compromised. Attention to revegetation is long overdue.
- Retaining wall specifications and typical construction details are excluded. The competencies of designs as well as construction methods need attention for safety as well as sustainability reasons. Have Municipality of Anchorage relevant codes been identified? How will any and all be met?
- Hand construction is proposed “if it is clearly desired for lower visual impact and environmental impact”. Who will be the impartial judge on where those impacts will occur?
- It is said that hikers may use the existing AVSA access trails to avoid encounters with downhill bikes on the north leg of the trail. Is this one of the stretches where the grade will be “very fast downhill” (again, no profile drawing)?
- The optional AVSA access trails are not presented as such on the CalTopo generated plan view. How many are there and where are they located?
- The potential for conflicts being small is said to be due to very long site lines. This does not address that ignorance of universal etiquette, or disregard for same, is the cause of much conflict on multiuse trails regardless of the length of the line of sight. Will bikers not be accountable for controlling themselves when other users are present? How will accountability be enforced?
- Steep side slopes of 40% or more requiring deep excavations, perhaps to bedrock, are said to be expected. What is the point of routing through such terrain? Why not avoid it?
- Will the design and construction result entirely in Adaptive Friendly, Adaptive Optimized, or NOT-adaptive whatsoever constructed trail(s). Will the stated specification achieve whichever of those goals is desired?
- Will the design specifications accommodate stock including horses and llamas?

Concept trail: Field Checked but not fully laid out and flagged

- Might slope shading using Cal Topo help identify avalanche terrain? Extent of bedrock and suitable turn locations might be issues to resolve sooner rather than later.

Construction Budget Recommendations

- What will be done to prevent disturbance of nearby residents as well as wildlife in the vicinity during jack hammering?
- What will be the basis for setting the projects “prevailing wages”?
- The planning/funding budget is estimated at \$880,000. How much is included for civil design work? How much is included for third party construction quality control? How much is included for specific signage educating users of yield etiquette? How much is included for investing in a trust or another a financial instrument for maintenance and repair in perpetuity? How much is included for funding of park rangers to police biking, including e-biking, and for park management? How much is included for performance and or payment bonds? How much is included to compensate South Fork Valley residents for harm to property values resulting from on-street parking, increased crime and other such negative impacts to their neighborhood? How much is included for robust public involvement (four public meetings, excluding those of easily manipulated community councils: one for draft plan design review and comment; one for draft-final plan review and comment; one mid-construction; one final acceptance)? How much will go into the pocket of the CMBR agent? How much is included for auditing by a CPA?
- For publicly funded grants or similar will bidding be open to constructors with a conflict of interest?
- Will the contracting be done as firm fixed price, time and material not to exceed, or other basis?
- How much is included for foot only trails paralleling the proposed “preferred biking” trails?
- How much is included to support the land manager to patrol, resolve conflicts, address wear and tear and design flaws and construction insufficiencies?

Appendix I Nine Elements of a Sustainable Trail

- Element 8, seems to conflict with building of retaining walls, jackhammering rock outcropping, deep excavation, etc.
- Element 9 will not be met as historic users will be displaced due to fear of conflicts with bikers that ignore and or are ignorant of universally accepted multi-use trail etiquette. An increase in parking at the undersized parking lot in nearby residential neighborhood(s) will also result further aggravating peace loving homeowners who have yet to recover from being “Muktucked”.

Why is it necessary to use public land to satisfy the needs of a relatively small user group when time, money and effort may be better invested in meeting the wants and needs of a larger community?

The CSP CAB is encouraged to carefully consider requests such as this before issuing supporting letters. Thoughtful discussion in full view of interested and concerned members of competing user groups, as well as members of the general public who have the best interest of the CSP at heart, will build trust,

add goodwill and increase support. Public engagement is paramount to this end. Rubberstamping is likely to result in backlash and harm to credibility. Kicking-the-can-down-the-road may result likewise.

In considering a CSP CAB vote, members may wish to soul search about their personal biases in addition to direct or indirect pecuniary and other conflict(s) of interest(s), asking themselves and each other why and how they came to be on the CSP CAB. Looking over the horizon, consider too, what will be the additional burdens on the land manger resulting from your actions? Is it realistic to expect a State agency that is historically understaffed and inadequately funded (take a wide open-eyed walk on local trails to better understand the current dilemma) to assume additional responsibilities? Consider as well the reputation and character of the persons and organizations that approach for your support. Investigate them. Scrutinize their motivation(s). Assess sincerity vs. Self-interests vs. the common good. Seek input from various user groups previously impacted by them. Commit genuinely to the fulfillment all SIX of purposes published on the CSP CAB website.

Thank you for your time and service.

Cordially,

Shaun E. Sexton

Shaun E. Sexton
Valued Customer

Cc. CSP@Alaska.gov
Irene Turletes, CSP CAB Chairperson (I.Turletes@gmail.com)

THE
CONSERVATION FUND

Brad Meiklejohn
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October 15, 2025

Justin DiPaola-Allen
Superintendent, Chugach State Park
and
Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board

RE: Bikes in Chugach State Park

Dear Justin and Members of the Board,

Who doesn't love a bicycle?

Bicycles put man's greatest invention, the wheel, to work for efficient, low-cost human-powered transportation. All the world over, bicycles bring joy and freedom to young and old. Bicycles in Alaska have a tandem history with dog teams in pioneering routes through the wilderness. Modern fat bikes evolved in Alaska to ride the snowy Iditarod Trail, and intrepid Alaskans continue to push the frontier of what is possible on a bike.

Rapidly evolving bike technology has made them lighter, faster, stronger and better able to handle extremely rough, steep and remote terrain even where no trail exists. No longer content to merely toodle along the Eklutna lakeside trail, bikers grind up and whiz down the Dome, zip through Resurrection Pass in a day, or hurtle down the new top-secret bandit trail on Orca. Seemingly there is nowhere a bike can't go these days.

It's a heckuva lotta fun and who wants to stand in the way of more fun? If you are a hiker standing in the way of that fun, you'll get flattened if you don't jump out of the way.

You gotta hand it to the mountain bike community. They are organized, well-financed and relentlessly aggressive in pushing for more biking opportunities in Southcentral Alaska. Witness the new bike trails that have sprung up at Mirror Lake, Kincaid, the Hillside and Beach Lake in the past five years. In Chugach Park, Will Taygan and Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR) have stepped up to advance a

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new bike trail in Indian Valley, got a new bridge installed at Four Mile Creek in Peters Creek, pushed to expand biking deeper into Peters Creek, lobbied for bikes on the Muktuk Marston trail, proposed a new bike trail on Rendezvous Ridge, and begun laying the groundwork to open the Ship Creek Wilderness to mountain bikes.

Will Taygan and CMBR have been highly effective at seizing the levers of Chugach State Park to benefit bikers. The December 27th, 2024 letter ostensibly from the Chugach Park Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) endorsing the expansion of biking in Peters Creek was plainly drafted by Will Taygan and CMBR. Will Taygan asserts that the CAB “approved” bike use on the Muktuk Marston trail, though the CAB can only recommend, not approve, anything. Now, Will Taygan and CMBR show up with a fully-designed bike trail proposal for Rendezvous Ridge that they will help fund and build.

It is understandable that a cash-strapped Chugach Park would welcome Will Taygan and CMBR with open arms. But perhaps it is time to stop and look into the mouth of this gift horse before it eats our collective lunch. We are witnessing a slow-motion and highly-strategic takeover of Chugach Park by an insatiable user group. It is time to call a halt to this take-over to consider its broader impacts and implications.

It is my experience that bikes are incompatible with pedestrians and disruptive to wildlife. Despite the accepted yield hierarchy, bikers rarely yield to hikers, whether on the Coastal Trail or Devils Pass. I have been knocked down and watched hapless hikers get knocked down by indifferent bikers. Countless are the stories of bikers slamming into or under Kincaid moose or chasing or being chased by irate bears. The expansion of mountain biking in Chugach Park displaces hikers and wildlife.

The Rendezvous Ridge bike trail proposed by Will Taygan and CMBR is a terrible idea for many reasons:

1. Rendezvous Ridge is a major travel route for wolverines, wolves, bears, moose, coyotes and Dall sheep. Bikers would displace wildlife from this ridge.
2. There would be no effective means to keep bikes along a designated trail along the tundra ridge. High-speed downhill riding is a thing, and bikers would be drawn to “dropping” the spur ridges and bowls off both sides of Rendezvous Ridge.
3. Happy Trails is the same trail building company that made the South Fork Community unhappy with the Zorro trail to Hunter Pass. These absurd switch-backs are not revegetating and continue to shed rocks into the trail from the highly erosive cutbanks. We were sold a bill of goods that this Zorro trail would supplant the highly-braided social trail to Hunter Pass; most people get so impatient with these ridiculous zigzags that they opt to make the fall-line social trail even worse.

I grew up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire where we learned the hard way the importance of taking care of our alpine tundra. News flash: alpine tundra is fragile, slow-growing, and difficult to

restore. After decades of passive neglect, the alpine tundra of the White Mountains was laced with wide wandering braided trails and countless bootleg social trails. With a focused educational effort and subtle and not so-subtle stone walls, hikers in the White Mountains have now been corralled onto the designated trails in the alpine areas. Meanwhile, the alpine areas of Chugach Park are a mess. Witness the sprawl of ruts from Honey Bear up to McHugh, or at Bear Mountain, or Harp, or Wolverine, or the runner's ridges off the Johnson Trail. Rather than inviting more damage to the fragile alpine tundra at Rendezvous Ridge, we should get a handle on the situation throughout Chugach Park before it gets worse.

Recreation is not an inherent societal good; it's what you do because of recreation that matters. Do you commit to protecting the wild nature that provides the backdrop for your exploits or do you simply take? Do you respect the wild animals who make their home in the Chugach or are you oblivious and indifferent to the way they flee from you? Are you a better citizen because of your time in Chugach Park?

Sincerely,



Brad Meiklejohn
Senior Alaska Representative

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Empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience

November 4, 2025

Mountain Bike Position Statement for Trails

Members of the Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board:

On behalf of American Hiking Society (AHS) and the 63 million strong hiking community who enjoy the trails and green spaces across all public lands I write to share our [Mountain Bike Position Statement](#) when considering support for trail use changes in Chugach State Park. AHS has a decades-long history of stewardship across Alaska public lands providing much needed volunteer support to Alaska's trail systems.

Key Points when Considering Mountain Bike Impact on Hiking Trails

Hiking trails, or foot-only trails, are pathways developed and managed for quiet, slow travel and the enjoyment of nature away from mechanical conveyances, including bicycles. American Hiking Society is dedicated to the preservation and protection of foot-only trails as an important resource for the hiking public. Multi-purpose trails, which address a variety of recreation needs, may accommodate both foot and bicycle travel, but should be designed to protect the interest of hikers and bicyclists in a manner that enhances the safety for both types of user groups.

Additionally, American Hiking Society opposes the use of mountain bicycles in designated wilderness areas and areas under consideration for wilderness designation. Consideration should also be given to appropriate use types for trails that extend into wilderness areas and may result in non-permitted use within wilderness areas.

American Hiking seeks to work cooperatively with mountain bicycle organizations, and encourages cooperative trail planning and stewardship at the local level by hikers and bicyclists. *Inherent in this spirit of cooperation is the position that the experience of hiking and the interest of hiking constituents must vigilantly be protected, whether on foot trails or multi-purpose trails suitable to hikers. Where the interests of hikers cannot be guaranteed in a multi-purpose trail system, foot-only trails must be incorporated and protected.*

American Hiking Society supports the principle of managing individual trails for the primary purposes for which they are currently intended. New uses should be evaluated for their impact on the primary purpose of the trail. Trail uses should be based upon the collective input of all hiking stakeholders. In issues involving local and state trails, American Hiking may defer to the local hiking constituency. When requested by a local hiking constituency, American Hiking may assist on behalf of hikers or intervene to mitigate conflict.

Hiker-Biker Trail Guidelines

Additional guidance is provided for evaluating the acceptability of multi-purpose trail proposals accommodating foot and bicycle travel. American Hiking Society supports the following design and management criteria.

Safety

Trails should be designed to allow for safe passage of one traveler by another, and provide for adequate visibility to avoid collisions. Design should account for varying speeds of travel. Existing trails require evaluation of the need for vegetation clearing or rerouting to ensure adequate visibility.

The Rendezvous Ridge Concept Trail Plan (Plan) raises safety concerns for both hikers and bicyclists. This includes the Grade which is described in the plan as “rideable uphill but very fast downhill,” and the Design Turn Radius, “The upper switchbacks will be very tight and have a minimal turn radius.”

Environmental Protection

Trail surfaces should be designed to sustain all allowed uses under all conditions, or be managed with provisions that protect against environmental damage and erosion under certain conditions. Additional resource protection measures may also be needed to sustain bicycle use on wet soils, at stream crossings, and along steeper trail grades. Evaluations should consider the acceptability of these changes to hikers, particularly when adding bicycle use to foot trails.

The Plan indicates that “the upper switchbacks require retaining walls” and “deep excavation” including bedrock. These changes pose potential environmental protection challenges that could change the nature of the trail.

The Experience of Hiking

Trails developed for multiple uses should be designed with consideration given to the needs and concerns of people traveling on foot. Existing trails require evaluation of the need for trail widening, relocations, and removal or modification of tread drainage features, steps, bridges and other potential barriers to bicycle use--modifications that can compromise the experience of hikers. Research has demonstrated the potential for conflicts between hikers and bicyclists, particularly at higher levels of use and differences in rates of speed by hikers and bikers.

The Plan indicates that “very fast downhill” speeds will occur by bicyclists increasing the likelihood of user conflict. The Plan also indicates displacement of hikers off the existing trail indicating that “if they do not wish to encounter downhill bikes on the north leg of this trail, they can switch out to those trails.” New trail design that begins with the assumption that existing uses will be displaced at the expense of another user group should not be pursued.

Thank you for considering these concerns and listening to the voices of the local hiking community.

Please contact Tyler Ray, Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy, tray@americanhiking.org with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,



Tyler Ray
Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy
American Hiking Society

October 18, 2025

PO Box 671264

Chugiak, AK 99567

Mr. Justin DiPaolo-Allen
Superintendent, Chugach State Park; and
Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board
18620 Seward Highway
Anchorage, AK 99516

Dear Mr. DiPaola-Allen and the Advisory Board:

I am writing as a frequent user of Chugach State Park and as a neighbor of the park in Peters Creek. I consider Chugach State Park to be one of the great assets to our community that must be managed wisely and carefully. The main purpose of this letter is to strongly endorse the concerns raised by Brad Meikeljohn of The Conservation Fund in a letter dated October 15, 2025, in regards to proposals to expand mountain biking in the Park. It's ironic that I am writing this as I frequently ride bikes in the park, particularly on the Peters Creek trail and at Eklutna. I enjoy this immensely, but I am not naïve to think that pushing bike trails further into the park will not have deleterious impacts to wildlife, habitat, and other users. I have seen the 'trails' that the Chugach Mountain Bike Rides have built elsewhere. They are nice, but they are more like roads than trails. Their development will inevitably and permanently change the character of these places, and will not only encourage bicycles, but also electric trail bikes, which are already in use in Chugach State Park and elsewhere.

Because I live in Peters Creek, I'd like to add some additional details concerning proposed expansion of mountain biking in this part of the park. Peters Creek is one of the wildest and least developed drainages in Chugach State Park. Nevertheless, it is showing wear and tear and erosion, especially in the alpine portions of the heavily-used Bear Mountain and Mount Eklutna trails. Cyclists can now ride to about mile 5.5 where there is a boundary marker with a no biking symbol. Up to this point, the trail is challenging, fun and very rideable. After all, historically, trucks used to routinely go back this far. After this point, the trail narrows and is far more difficult to ride because of ruts, tree roots and wet areas. It is currently accessed by hikers and riders on horseback and snowmachines and fat tire bikes when the snow cover allows. Cycling here in summer is not fun; I tried it a few times. Yet with a lot of money, machinery and fill a rideable trail could be pushed back into the Peters Creek Valley. I am perfectly satisfied with the existing, challenging riding opportunities in this valley - they are underutilized as is, and I see no reason to further degrade the wild qualities of this remarkable valley.

There is also another matter which I must raise concerning making the Peters Creek trail more of a destination – parking. There is none! There is no formal trailhead at Peters Creek and no park parking. Trail users park on neighborhood roads. There is a flat area where a parking lot could be built on park lands, but this would require improving the existing trail through a 40-acre private parcel and would create an isolated attractive nuisance. The owners of this parcel are not interested in a parking lot beyond their property nor vehicles driving through their property. Relatedly, access to the existing trail is via substandard roads – Chugach Park, Kullberg, Sullins, and Malcolm drives. Well aware of these concerns, proponents of the plan keep pushing ahead, ignoring the concerns of the local residents. Encouraging more use of the Peters Creek trail just aggravates an existing problem that State Parks seems ill-equipped, financially and otherwise, to solve.

Let's keep Chugach State Park WILD.

Sincerely,

Tony DeGange
Peters Creek, AK



CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

18620 Seward Hwy, Anchorage, AK 99516 Phone: 907-345-5014 Fax: 907-345-6982

December 27th, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

The Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) is a volunteer board composed of members of the public appointed by the Director of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation. The CAB is not a decision making body, but rather an *advisory* board. The CAB offers their opinion on developments material to the function and operation of Chugach State Park in an effort to advise funders, community members and Chugach State Park management.

In that capacity, the CAB would like to voice their support for a regulation change to allow bicycles on the Peters Creek Valley Trail from Six Mile Creek to Wall Street Creek.

This section of trail, identified as Trail ID# 117b in the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan (TMP), has an indicated designed use of "Pack & Saddle" and an indicated managed use of "Pack & Saddle; Hike; Bike". The TMP identifies the need for a regulation change to allow bicycles and bring the regulations in line with the intent of the TMP. Please note that the recommendations contained in the TMP were crafted with significant community, public and user group feedback.

The first 4.3 miles of the Peters Creek Valley Trail, identified as Trail ID#117a in the TMP, is currently open to bicycles. Extending the available mileage open to bicycles from 4.3 to 13.8 miles, with this regulation change, will increase the opportunities for bicyclists - a growing user group - in Chugach State Park and offer a new bikepacking destination in upper Peters Creek Valley.

If this regulation change is made, the Citizen Advisory Board encourages the bike community and affiliated organizations (including Singletrack Advocates, Chugach Mountain Bike Riders and the Alaska Off-Road Cycling Alliance) to familiarize themselves with the wilderness boundary - beyond which bikes are not allowed - and educate fellow bicyclists about these regulations.

The CAB reiterates our support for a regulation change to allow bicycles on the Peters Creek Valley Trail from Six Mile Creek to Wall Street Creek and hope to see the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation advance this regulation change in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

Haley Johnston, Board Chair
Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board