



2021 IMPACT REPORT



A LETTER FROM OUR OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR, KATHY SWARTZ

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Hello Everyone,

When I joined the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation board six years ago, I had never served on a nonprofit board. Within 2 months, I was elected as Board Chair and have been serving since. I didn't know anything about Robert's Rules and very little about trails. I just knew that I loved the outdoors where we were raising our family. I also knew an opportunity when I saw one – the chance to expand and improve on all of those public spaces where we liked to recreate.

In 2015, our grants were small, capped at under \$10,000, and we awarded five grants for a total of \$36,340. In 2021, we awarded 13 grants for a total of \$386,816. In the last six years, we have granted \$1.2 million to partners executing trail and park projects. Our largest grant was \$100,000 for the new Settler's Bay Coastal Park and we are also executing a nearly \$1 million Pittman Robertson grant for 15 miles of new trail connecting the K'esugi Ken Campground to K'esugi Ridge Trail in Denali State Park. We have two staff members, Wes Hoskins our Executive Director and Taylor Raftery, our Donor Relations Officer. They are bright motivated individuals who believe in and work hard for our mission. We have transitioned from our founding board members to new board members representing the diversity and geography of the Mat-Su.

In 2021, we revised our Strategic Plan to energize our mission to be the trails and parks resource for a healthy community in Mat-Su. We developed four strategic directions like a compass to focus on People; Partnerships; Connections and Resources. We also acknowledge in our Strategic Plan that we recreate outdoors on the ancestral territory of the Dena'ina and Ahtna peoples.



The year 2021 was my last year as Board Chair and I'm happy to let you know that George Hoden will serve as the Board Chair in 2022.

George, Lorraine Cordova (our skilled Economist Treasurer), and I are the longest-serving members on the board. George has been our Vice-Chair for a couple years. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of land management issues in the Mat-Su and he's a pretty good downhill skier. George is a quick study and he also sees the opportunities ahead of us.

We still have important work to do to secure long-term financial sustainability and so I signed up for one more board term. We need significant donations from supporters to be able to continue our work. Thank you to our new and regular donors! We are so grateful for your support. See you on the trails!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Swartz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end.

Kathy Swartz,
Outgoing Board Chair

"Here, in the south-facing basin beneath the tallest mountains in North America, the Dena'ina can demonstrate that they have used virtually all lakes with good fisheries, all major stream basins, all of the more accessible passes through the Alaska Range and most of the foothills and ridges..."—Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina, 2016

TRAILS AND PARKS FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

OUR MISSION

To be the trails and parks resource for a healthy community in Mat-Su.

OUR VISION

A World-Class Trail and Park System in the Mat-Su Borough.



Alaskans For Palmer Hay Flats, in coordination with teachers at Machtetanz Elementary, received a \$3095 grant to purchase and stock an "Outdoor Learning Cart" to enable teachers to easily facilitate outdoor learning experiences on nearby trails.

OUR PRIORITIES

Creating Opportunities

As a resource for funding, ideas, and networks, MSTPF seeks to create synergistic opportunities for trail and park projects, maintenance, and systems-work.

Building Connections

Funding for interconnectivity—trails that connect to other trails and trails that connect to parks—is prioritized. Connections to users and partners are integral to our work.

Facilitating Partnerships

Our work depends on relationships with stakeholders and partners, including users, donors, nonprofits, grantees, and other organizations; state, local, tribal governments; funders; land managers and owners; and businesses. Leveraging of other funds, resources, and volunteers is integral to our work.

Embodying Stewardship

Via funding, advocacy, and education, we will embody stewardship. We fund open spaces/public spaces. As a foundation, we are responsible for a community resource that we will steward responsibly, transparently and for our mission. We will educate users, promote best practices in trail and park construction, and will fund maintenance to enhance the user's experience and protect public resources for future generations.

Promoting Equity and Accessibility

We seek to make outdoor activities via trails and parks equitable and accessible for all groups and all types of users, motorized and non-motorized, all ages, and varying levels of abilities or disabilities.

OUR WORK IN 2021



Student Conservation Crew building new trails and park facilities at Settlers Bay Coastal Park. Photo by the Student Conservation Association.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR DOLLAR

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation is a small organization with a big impact! Your support helps to fund local trail and park projects, planning and advocacy efforts, and so much more!

Thanks to generous community donations, the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation provided \$386,816 in grant funding during 2021 for a variety of projects all over the Mat-Su.

YOU GET AN MPO!

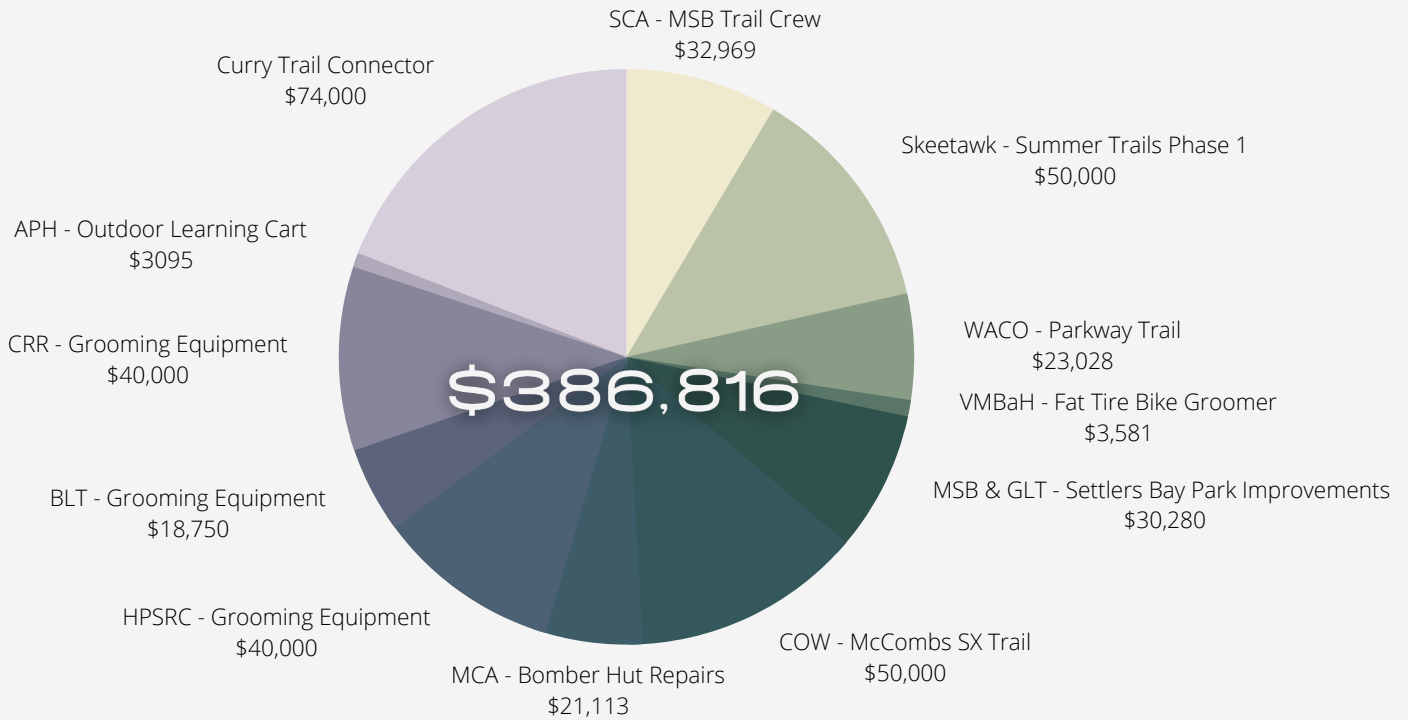
AND YOU GET AN MPO!



No, This isn't Oprah, but the Mat-Su core area is very likely going to be getting a brand new Metropolitan Planning Organization after the results of the 2020 census are released in the Federal Register this spring. Federal law requires that any newly designated urban area form an MPO. This will ultimately be a good thing as there will be a professionalized planning body to carry out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process. The boundaries of the MPO are yet to be decided.

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation has been involved on the Pre-MPO steering committee for over a year. Now we have a seat on the policy board which is the decision-making body of the MPO. **We hope to amplify the need for active transportation corridors and solutions for people who go by foot, bike, or otherwise need alternative forms of transportation.** The process has been deftly managed by contractors so far, but an interim project manager is being sought. Stay tuned for more info this spring!

2021 GRANTMAKING



GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS



Skeetawk will begin construction on the first of a multi-phased summer trails plan, to create a 4,300' multi-use trail, and a 2,500' handicap accessible loop off the top of the first chairlift.



The Mat-Su Borough and Great Land Trust have been continuing to develop new trails, facilities, and access at Settlers Bay Coastal Park. Projects include an ADA bluff trail and viewing platform, two new CXT's, 1-mile of new intermediate bike trail, and improvements to 2-miles of beginner bike trails. Photo of MSTPF, MSB, and GLT Staff visiting the park in Summer 2021.



The 2021 renovation of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska's Bomber hut included adding a foyer and additional sleeping area, as well as improving the weather and wildlife resistance of the hut. Photo by Mountaineering Club of Alaska.



To see more projects that YOU helped fund in 2021, scan the QR code or visit www.matsutrails.org/2021-grantees



CURRY CONNECTOR TRAIL PROJECT

The Curry Connector Trail Project, located in Denali State Park, will add almost 15-miles of new trail. This segment will connect the K'esugi Ken Campground trails to the existing K'esugi Ridge Trail, creating a 45-mile trail system in this popular recreation area in Denali State Park. This Fall the trail crew wrapped up the second season of the project, and are expecting construction to be completed in Fall 2023.

Improvements to this trail were provided through a cooperative effort between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska State Parks, Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation, and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman Robertson Act). Taxes on your purchase of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment are used to support public access to wildlife resources and improve hunter access.



Gabe Travis and Christine Byl owners of Interior Trails and Wes Hoskins Executive Director of the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation hiking part of the Curry Connector Trail, Fall 2021.



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*Watch the
2021 Project
Update Video!*



Gabe Travis, co-owner of Interior Trails, and the rest of the 2021 trail crew signing a section of boardwalk that they constructed for the Curry Connector Trail.

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation is administering the funding, managing the trail construction contract with the trail building company Interior Trails, as well as providing a 25% funding match to complete this 1.2 million dollar project.

Thank you to all of our partners, including the Mat-Su Health Foundation, Interior Trails, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska State Parks, and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman Robertson Act).

This project, and so many other world-class trail and park projects funded in the Mat-Su, are only possible due to the generosity of community donors. Thank you for all of your support!

SCORP PLANNING

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation has been facilitating the Mat-Su Borough Regional working groups to establish regional priorities, projects, and recommendations for the 2022-2027 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is updated every five years and serves as a guide for all public outdoor recreation in urban and rural neighborhoods, cities, and regions for the State. This plan will bring together the wants and needs of Alaska recreation users and providers into a single comprehensive document. A draft SCORP document will be available for public review and comment later this Spring.

ALASKA LONG TRAIL

Throughout the State, local trail builders, recreationists, land managers, advocates, and trail funders have been collaborating on the establishment of a world-class, braided network of routes between Seward and Fairbanks; a trail that supports and celebrates the diversity of Alaska's outdoor recreation opportunities all year-round. Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation Staff have been facilitating the early-stage planning efforts for the Mat-Su segment. The planning process for this 500+ mile project is in the early stages, and there will continue to be opportunities for public and organization engagement in the process.

LOOKING AHEAD TO '22



Strategic directions that will guide the foundation's work through 2022:

- **PEOPLE:** The value of trails and parks for a healthy community.
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Convener, catalyst, and partner for trails and parks.
- **CONNECTIONS:** Support interconnected/integrated trails and parks system.
- **RESOURCES:** Fund development and management for the organization and for granting.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR TRAILS AND PARKS IN THE MAT-SU!

The Board and Staff of the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation are so grateful for each of its supporters and partners. Thank you for joining our work to develop world-class trails, parks, and outdoor opportunities in the Mat-Su.

As our community's population grows, so does the need for improvements of our existing trails and parks, as well as deliberate community planning to create new opportunities. Every gift of time, money, or resources is invaluable to our efforts to support a healthy community.

See you on the trails!

THANKS TO THE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2021!

Alder Architecture & Design, LLC
DuClos Orthodontics
Mat-Su Regional Medical Center
The Employees of HDL Engineering

Alaska Community Foundation
Palmer Community Foundation
Mat-Su Health Foundation
The United Way Mat-Su

Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation

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