

Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation

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Palmer, AK – Independence Mine State Historical Park will receive some much-needed historic restoration and preservation work over the next three years. The Mat Su Trails and Parks Foundation (MSTPF) is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$1.3 million dollar grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to partner with the Department of Natural Resources – Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR).

“For the past six months, we have been partnering with the National Park Service, State Historical Preservation Office and DPOR to submit an application to the Helmsley Charitable Trust,” said Wes Hoskins, Executive Director for MSTPF. This opportunity is the result of a walking tour that was coordinated by DPOR Director Ricky Gease with a board member from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. As a result of discussions stemming from this tour, MSTPF was invited to submit an application for funding.

“Independence Mine State Historical Park has been a draw for tourists from all over the world, and there is so much potential for providing a more profound visitor experience”, stated Director Gease. “We rely on partnerships with many non-profit and friend groups across the state supporting our operations and this is a shining example of how that partnership with MSTPF and the support of the Helmsley Charitable Trust will make an incredible difference for preserving this historic site”, said Gease.

Grant funding will be managed by the MSTPF to coordinate with private contractors and consultants with oversight from the State Historic Preservation Office to make repairs and upgrades to four primary buildings: the Managers House, Bunk House 1 & 2, and the Mess Hall. Over the next three years, work will be focused on exterior areas in need of repair, starting with an in-depth assessment and developing a complete scope of work for contractors to complete.

“This is a rare opportunity for the state to partner with MSTPF on a project of this scope”, said Stuart Leidner Superintendent of the Mat Su Region, “we are grateful to the Helmsley Charitable Trust for supporting this project and look forward to sharing progress on this historic restoration project as it moves forward. The high level of these facility improvements have simply been out of reach for us with current funding. With MSTPF’s willingness to partner with us, we can make a real impact on this piece of our history,” states Leidner.