THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL: A PATH FOR A STRONGER SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

From the Camino de Santiago in Spain to the Great Himalayan Trail in Nepal, the Inca Trail in Peru to the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails in the United States, long trails have captured the attention of travelers the world over. With some of the most stunning wilderness in the world, Alaska is long overdue in creating a world class long trail of its own. Long trails engage visitors in everything from simple day hikes to multi-week, bucket list lifetime accomplishments. Alaska Trails and its partners are proposing such a route connecting Fairbanks and Seward.

This first 500-mile segment could ultimately expand into a 2000+ mile trail extending north from Fairbanks to the Brooks Range and the North Slope, and south to a future SE Long Trail, following an alluring mix of trails and ferry rides. Many sections of the proposed Alaska Long Trail already exist or are currently planned, and the route is almost entirely on public lands, enormously reducing the complexity and cost of the trail.

It is time for Alaska to invest in its future by creating a route that will stand with the other great long trails of the world.
WHY LONG TRAILS FOR ECONOMY?

- **Three Million Visitors** a year hike a portion of the Appalachian Trail.
- **100% Increase**: growth in National Park Service requests for John Muir Trail permits from 2011 to 2015.
- **Growing Demand for Hiking**: the fastest growing activity for both air and cruise out-of-state Alaska visitors 2011-16.
- **$137 Million** in increased annual Alaska spending if just 1/2 of out-of-state visitors added "One More Day" to their trip.
- **$412 Billion**: Outdoor recreation is the “Sleeping Giant of The US Economy,” providing 2.2% of the total US GDP, larger than fishing, farming, forestry, utilities, or telecommunications.

WHY FAIRBANKS TO SEWARD?

- **Momentum and Landowner Support**: Nearly all the route is on public lands; much of the trail exists today or is in progress.
- **Manageable Costs**: Most of the route crosses the kinds of terrain where trail construction and maintenance costs aren’t excessive.
- **Economic Impact**: Proximity to communities will generate jobs, business opportunities and tax revenue.
- **“Goldilocks Factor”**: Wild Alaska, but manageable logistics; lots of options to hike subsets of the full trail.
- **Wow Factor**: A trail through spectacular country, with generous servings of mountains, glaciers and wildlife, spiced with history.

BOTTOM LINE:

**THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL DELIVERS A BIG PAYOFF**

Completing this trail could help get Alaskans back to work during this time when so many people have lost jobs due to the COVID pandemic. The trail will attract highly sought-after independent travelers that bring a host of benefits to the local economy. Alaska is ready to expand the foundation for a clean and sustainable industry, an industry that will support both immediate and long-term Alaska jobs and Alaskan-owned businesses.

Visit Alaska Trails for more information [https://www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail](https://www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail)