



## **ALASKA TRAILS INITIATIVE – SOLICITATION FOR APPLICATIONS FOR A PROJECT MANAGER**

Alaska Trails is seeking highly qualified applicants to manage projects leading to more and better trails in Alaska. The primary responsibility for this position, working as an Alaska Trails staff member, is to manage the *Tongass Sustainable Trail Strategy* project. A secondary responsibility is to help with the overall statewide *Alaska Trails Initiative*. We also hope that the person hired for this position will continue with Alaska Trails, and shift into the lead role on the statewide Trails Initiative.

The Tongass Trails project, funded by the US Forest Service under a Challenge Cost Share Grant, runs from September 2020 to December 2021. This position has certain funding for one year, continuing through December 2021. We are optimistic (but can't guarantee) this position will continue into 2022, taking over the lead on the overall Alaska Trails Initiative and as part of the expected second phase of the Tongass project. Compensation over the initial, one-year project will be based on experience, ranging from \$60,000 to \$80,000, with limited benefits. Below is information about Alaska Trails and the Trails Initiative, the Tongass Sustainable Trails project, tasks associated with this position and qualifications expected of applicants. **Applications are due by Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>** and will be reviewed by Alaska Trails with a decision in early January.

### **BACKGROUND – THE ALASKA TRAILS INITIATIVE (ATI)**

Alaska Trails is a statewide 501 (c) (3) non-profit. Alaska Trails is leading the statewide *Alaska Trails Initiative*, with the goal of more and better trails all over Alaska. We believe Alaska has only just begun to take full advantage of our State's phenomenal outdoor recreation resources. By working together to expand trails, huts, mapping and marketing, signage and trail maintenance and management, Alaska can:

- build a stronger, more durable Alaska economy
- attract and retain residents, businesses, retirees
- make it easier and more inviting to lead active, fun, healthy lives (especially in COVID-19 times)
- help expand diversity in outdoor recreation users
- guide growth to help sustain what makes Alaska unique

With partners around Alaska, in spring 2020 the Trails Initiative team released the statewide *Trails Investment Strategy*, identifying a set of high value trails projects (<https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-investment-strategy>). The US Forest Service in Alaska is an enthusiastic supporter of the Trails Initiative. The regional USFS office has now hired Alaska Trails to carry out a process like the railbelt-focused Trails Investment Strategy, but in the Tongass National Forest. The project, called the *Tongass National Forest Sustainable Trail Strategy*, will proceed under the broad themes outlined in the USFS's national trails strategy (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails/national-strategy>). That national strategy, like the Alaska Trails Initiative, focuses on building partnerships to improve existing and build new trails.

### **TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST SUSTAINABLE TRAIL STRATEGY – PROJECT MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Working with Alaska Trails Initiative Coordinator Chris Beck and Alaska Trails staff, lead the development of Tongass Sustainable Trails Strategy. Specific tasks:

- Building from work currently in progress – this fall's initial inventory of Tongass trails – help identify a subset of communities to work with on more detailed planning and strategy development.
- Set up and implement an effective outreach and partnership-building strategy.
- Develop a draft and final Tongass Trail Strategy document, following the general format and process of the Alaska Trails' spring 2020 Trail Investment Strategy.
- Ensure the project meets the expectations of the USFS Challenge Cost Share Agreement, within the project budget and schedule.

**Statewide Trails Initiative** In addition to the focus on the Tongass Project, 15-20% of this 12-month job will go to work on the Statewide Trails Initiative, helping over the year with actions needed to keep that Initiative moving forward, and potentially taking over the lead of that project in 2022.

## **TONGASS TRAILS STRATEGY/STATEWIDE TRAILS INITIATIVE – EXPERIENCE & SKILLS NEEDED:**

This position does not require specific quantified standards for academic achievement or years of professional experience. As is outlined below, applicants do need to have extensive experience and proven success in relevant fields as well as project management experience.

- **Vision.** Start with strong support for the ambitious vision, goals, and values of the Alaska Trails Initiative, in particular a strong belief in the need to expand trails as an economic strategy.
- **Leadership, diplomacy, confidence.** This position requires a unique combination of skills: a mix of passion and pragmatism, and the ability to be both an inspiring and decisive leader and, at the same time, a good listener and team builder. Responsibilities and keys to success include:
  - leadership – skill in bringing together partners to rally around and work towards a common vision
  - diplomacy – ability to build support from diverse parties, ranging from prominent business and government leaders to individual trail users, be they fans of snowmachines or wilderness hikes
  - facilitation – the day to day ability coordinate group action, and run successful meetings
- **Knowledge of Alaska outdoor recreation context.** Knowledge and experience on all the topics below is not an absolute requirement, but a big advantage and an important consideration in evaluating applicants:
  - trends in trail use and the economics of outdoor recreation and tourism, in Alaska and beyond
  - experience with the unique characteristics of Alaska politics and communities
  - knowledge of and preferably connections with the organizations, agencies, and systems of governance that affect trails, outdoor recreation and tourism funding and policies
  - On-the-ground experience with Alaska’s trails
- **Skills with research and analysis.** Ability to dive into and make sense of the economics of outdoor recreation, and the programs that control public land management policy and options for trails funding.
- **Strategic planning.** Responsibility and skill in conceiving, developing, and implementing strategies that advance goals of this project and ATI in general. Judgement to pick from many options those actions most likely to succeed; creativity to reach out and find previously unidentified projects, partners, volunteers.
- **Communication**
  - Strong writing skills and a knack for creating communication products that engage the interest to a wide range of entities
  - Experience and skill with use of social media, websites and other outreach tools used to inform and build support for trails
- **Project and staff management.** Ability to steer a complex project, synchronizing project schedules, tasks and deliverables, and to work well with client leadership and ATI staff.
- **Board/Executive Director relations.** Ability to work closely with the Alaska Trails Board, the Executive Director, and the ATI Coordinator, so the Tongass Project meets contractual requirements, and so the Trails Initiative continues to expand the success of Alaska Trails.
- **Fundraising.** In the latter half of 2020, this position will include helping with strategies to raise funds to further expand the scope and impact of the Trails Initiative. This includes helping Alaska Trails seek funding for both near term and more enduring ATI funding.
- **Willingness to work hard, to go “all in.”** In addition to the array of specific skills and responsibilities outlined above, this position requires a powerful belief in the Alaska Trails Initiative and its mission of “more and better trails”, a stronger, more durable Alaska economy, and more ways for people to be active, healthy and happy outdoors. The position requires the discipline and drive to work hard outside of a traditional office environment, both independently and as part of a passionate, motivated, at times opinionated team. This is not a strictly 9-5 job, but instead requires a continuing focus on Trails Initiative goals and ways to reach them.