

Agency: Department of Natural Resources**Project Title:****Project Type:** Maintenance and Repairs

Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation - Mt. Baldy

State Funding Requested: \$78,000
One-Time Need**House District:** Anchorage Areawide (11-27)**Brief Project Description:**

Will provide for the preliminary design of a sustainable hiking trail and for the construction of that trail from the end of Golden Eagle (Skyline) Drive to the summit of Mt. Baldy in Chugach State Park. House District 12, Senate F

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$78,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$78,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:**No funds have been provided.***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Mt. Baldy trail extends from the private property gate at the end Golden Eagle (Skyline) Drive in Eagle River, to the summit of Mt. Baldy in Chugach State Park. The popularity of this trail has grown significantly. Visitation estimates indicate that more than 25,000 people used the area last year. The vast majority of these people hike up a steep social trail* that has developed over the last two decades. Many of these park visitors are young families perhaps having their first hike. Others are runners who might run up and down the trail daily. Some are tourists or new people from Joint Base Elmendorf/Richardson seeking a view of Denali. Many are Chugiak-Eagle River folks out for a hike with the dog after work.

The result of this increasing public use is a heavily eroded trail that goes straight up the hill and is becoming more visible and dangerous to fall hazards created by poor footing and newly exposed rock. Heavy rains during the last summer have greatly adding to the rate of erosion.

This project is located in Senate District F and House District 12.

This project is being submitted by the Chugach State Park Citizen's Advisory Board. The Board advises the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on management of Chugach State Park. Our 15 person, volunteer Board represents park users including neighborhood groups, anglers, bikers, skiers, equestrians, hikers, hunters, and motorized users. One of the responsibilities of the Board is to participate in and comment on plans and programs that affect the Park.

This project was developed from public input received during the development of the Chugach State Park Management Plan, Park Trail Plan, and Access Plan. Hikers have contacted Board members and Park Management to urge the State of Alaska to address this park access and trail rehabilitation concern. There are 26 Letters of Support on file for this project

from local businesses, park user groups, community councils, and the Municipality of Anchorage.

Last year, an estimated 1.3 million people used the Park. Visitors using the Park provide substantial economic benefit to the State through their use of local tour operators or guides; outdoor equipment and clothing sales; as well as associated travel and accommodation revenue. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, last year outdoor recreation in Alaska resulted in 9.5 billion dollars in consumer spending, 92,000 jobs and \$711 million in state and local revenues. An example of that benefit is the Anchorage opening of "Cabella's" a nationally know outdoor equipment retailer.

The Board and state park management are confident that once this project is completed it will then be possible to enlist the assistance of park volunteers to maintain the improved trail. This will greatly reduce operating cost in the future.

This project will provide for the preliminary design* and rehabilitation of a two mile hiking trail that will reduce recreational trespass and conflicts with private property owners; promotes community livability and park access by making a popular social trail easier to use for a wider group of park visitors (families with children or people seeking a more moderate hike). It will also arrest the ever accelerating rate of erosion cause by use of the social trail, reduce maintenance costs, and the danger of fall hazards.

The current estimated total cost for this project is \$78K. Estimated \$18K for preliminary design by private contractor for a 10 to 12% grade, \$60K for trail crew labor and materials costs.

*Preliminary designs identify trail alignments and grades that will support a low maintenance, gradually ascending/descending, and dry path that will not negatively impact private property.

*Social trails are trails that have developed through local use over unimproved access points. They often ascend/descend directly on steep slopes, contain significant fall hazards, and are prone to severe erosion. The hiking trail to Mt. Baldy above Eagle River is an example of a social trail.

Why support this project? It will:

- reduce trail erosion and maintenance costs;
- diminish fall hazards; improve safety;
- promote livability; and
- stem conflicts with private property owners near park access points.

Project Timeline:

Expenditures will occur between June and September each year beginning in July 2014 and continue until September 2017 or until funds are expended.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

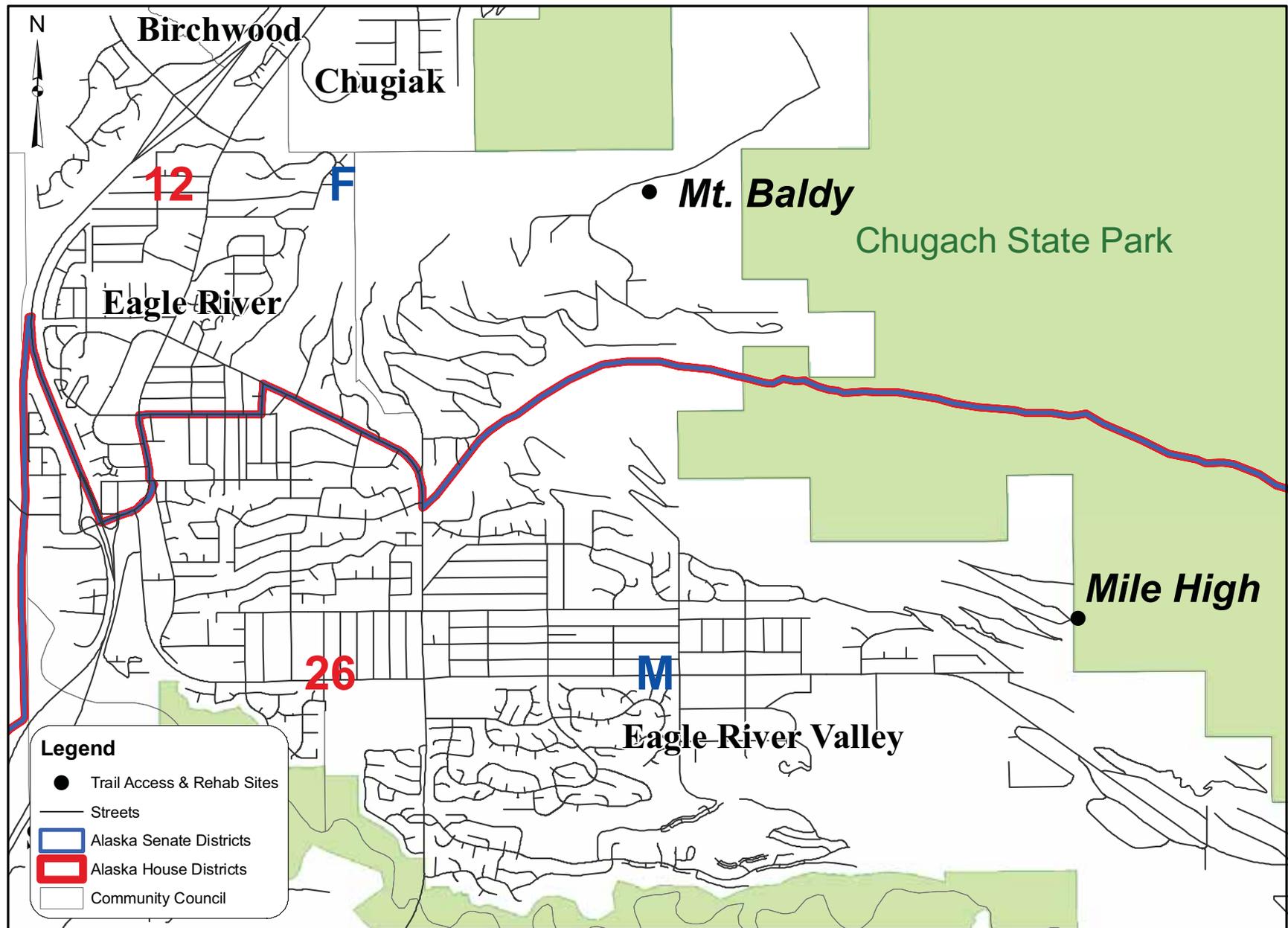
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Fall Hazard and Erosion Mt. Baldy Eagle River





2013 Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project



Letters of Support – Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project

There are 26 letters on file at present. The Board is seeking more.

Businesses

Anchorage Economic Development Corporation
Chugiak - Eagle River Chamber of Commerce
Visit Anchorage
Alaska Wildland Adventures
Alaska Trails, Inc.
Downtown Bicycle Rental and Flattop Mountain Shuttle
Eagle River Nature Center
Friends of Eagle River Nature Center
Salmon Berry Tours

Park User Groups

Alaska Mountain Rescue Group
Anchorage Snowmobile Club
Anchorage Petroleum Wives Club
Arctic Air Walkers
Happy Hikers
Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA)
Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage
Single Track Advocates (Mountain Bikers)

Community Councils

Eagle River Valley Community Council
Eklutna Valley Community Council
HALO – Area G Home and Landowners Organization
Huffman – O'Malley Community Council
Mid-Hillside and Hillside East Community Council
Turnagain Arm Community Council

Municipality of Anchorage

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission
Anchorage Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission
Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors