



2013 Alaska News



Isabel Babiak cuts the ribbon for the Naknek Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path. Photo: NPS

2012 Nationwide Success

2,154	Miles of Trail Developed
1,074	Miles of River Conserved
70,385	Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected
94%	Percentage of Community Partners Satisfied
100%	Alaska Community Partners Satisfied

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provide technical assistance to community groups, nonprofits, Native organizations, and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects communities initiate.

Recent Success

Naknek Sockeye Run Fitness Trail & Bike Path

Isabel Babiak was eight years old in 2008 when she thought about easier access to her school. With encouragement from the Bristol Bay Borough and her parents' guidance, she contacted RTCA in Anchorage seeking technical assistance and information on how to create a trail.

RTCA worked with Isabel to map out the project and help the community find both volunteers and funding partners. Isabel learned that great ideas may take time. Gathering input, identifying partners, finding funding, and negotiating a mix of government agencies and rules is not easy work. Over time, the list of project partners grew to include the Bristol Bay Borough and School District, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Safe Routes To School Program, the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, the American Society of Landscape Architects, Alaska Film Services, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and donations of labor, funds, and materials from community businesses, parents, and youth.

The result was a September 2012 ribbon cutting, celebrating not only the Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path that loops around the school and community health clinic, but also a new trailhead parking lot, filled land (to become a school ball field), and the installation of exercise equipment and student-created interpretive signs along the trail.

Over 150 people participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony. High attendance was a testament to the right partners and full community support.

Current Projects

1. Kachemak Bay Water Trail

Location: Homer, Alaska

Project Partners: Dave Brann, George Reising, Roark Brown, Robert Archibald, Devony Lehner, Kris Holdereid, Sandy Murray, Roger MacCampbell, Monte Davis, Marie McCarty, Brad Charters, Alaska State Parks, Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center, NOAA Kasitsna Bay Lab, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, Homer Wilderness Leadership, Cook Inlet Keeper

RTCA Contacts: Lisa Holzapfel, Heather Rice

Project Goal

Develop a water trail from Homer, to the head of Kachemak Bay, south to Seldovia. This 125-mile water trail will inspire exploration, understanding, and stewardship of the natural treasure that is Kachemak Bay.

NPS Role

Help partners implement their vision and create a strategic plan for the trail; identify potential funding sources; work with and help expand the network of partners and stakeholders; conduct community outreach to solicit additional support for the trail; and help evaluate the water trail sites, locations, and facilities.



Community members and city managers discuss the Kachemak Bay Water Trail in Homer, Alaska. Photo: NPS

2. Palmer Bike Park

Location: Palmer, Alaska

Project Partners: Ptarmigan Ptrails, City of Palmer, Sustainable Design Group, LLC, Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Backcountry Bikes, Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, Blue Mountain Wellness Center

RTCA Contacts: Lisa Holzapfel, Heather Rice

Project Goal

Build a bike park to give kids and adults a safe and fun way to gain skills and confidence to get out and enjoy local mountain biking trails. The bike park will fulfill multiple mission goals of the city's community and economic development plan, as well as the health community's goal for family fitness.

NPS Role

Help develop and expand partnerships; help evaluate bike park sites; conduct community outreach; and identify potential funding sources.

3. Skagway Pullen Creek StreamWalk

Location: Skagway, Alaska

Project Partners: Taiya Inlet Watershed Council, the Municipality of Skagway, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Juneau Field Office, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

RTCA Contacts: Lisa Holzapfel, Heather Rice

Project Goal

Create the Pullen Creek StreamWalk, a contiguous walking path with interpretive signs that ties together



Kids share ideas about bike park features they might like in their neighborhood park in Palmer, Alaska. Photo: NPS

Current Projects cont.

the historical and natural history points between Pullen Pond and the City Museum via the Pullen Creek corridor. This half-mile trail will help restore and protect riparian and fish habitat by properly guiding pedestrian traffic near the stream and teaching Skagway residents and visitors about salmon habitat and the local watershed.

NPS Role

Help identify funding sources; brainstorm grant application content and budgets; review draft grant applications; walk through associated compliance requirements; and provide interpretive theme guidance and community trail volunteer support.

4. Wrangell Trails Link and Extension

Location: Wrangell, Alaska

Project Partners: City and Borough of Wrangell, Wrangell Public Schools, Wrangell Medical Center, Healthy Wrangell Coalition, U.S. Forest Service Wrangell District, Wrangell Boy Scouts
RTCA Contacts: Lisa Holzapfel, Heather Rice

Project Goal

Create trail links between residential areas, open space, and parks to provide physical access from residential to educational and historical areas of town.

NPS Role

Work with partners to develop a community engagement process to obtain input from multiple types of trail users in conjunction with the Wrangell Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. Assist with initial trail route evaluation and provide the community with sustainable trail training.

“Thank you for all RTCA has done and is doing--this whole process feels so sort of big and scary and full of unknowns and possible unintended consequences that having RTCA provide us with wisdom, experience, and groundedness really matters.”

- Devony Lehner, Secretary, Kachemak Bay Water Trail Steering Committee



Walkers enjoy the view of Pullen Creek in Skagway, Alaska. Photo: NPS



A plan overview of trail links between residential areas and open space and parks in Wrangell, Alaska. Illustration: City and Borough of Wrangell

We're Here For You!

Do you have an outdoor recreation or conservation idea for your community? Just ask; we can help! RTCA can walk you through the project step by step. We count on the drive, commitment, and enthusiasm of community members to carry out the project.

Contact us to find out more:

Lisa Holzapfel
RTCA Alaska Program Manager
907-644-3586
lisa_holzapfel@nps.gov

Heather Rice
Outdoor Recreation Planner
907-644-3587
heather_rice@nps.gov



Communities Can Grow... From A Seed Of An Idea

The premise is simple. Like-minded citizens bring their ideas to an RTCA professional who provides guidance to make community-led projects happen.



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

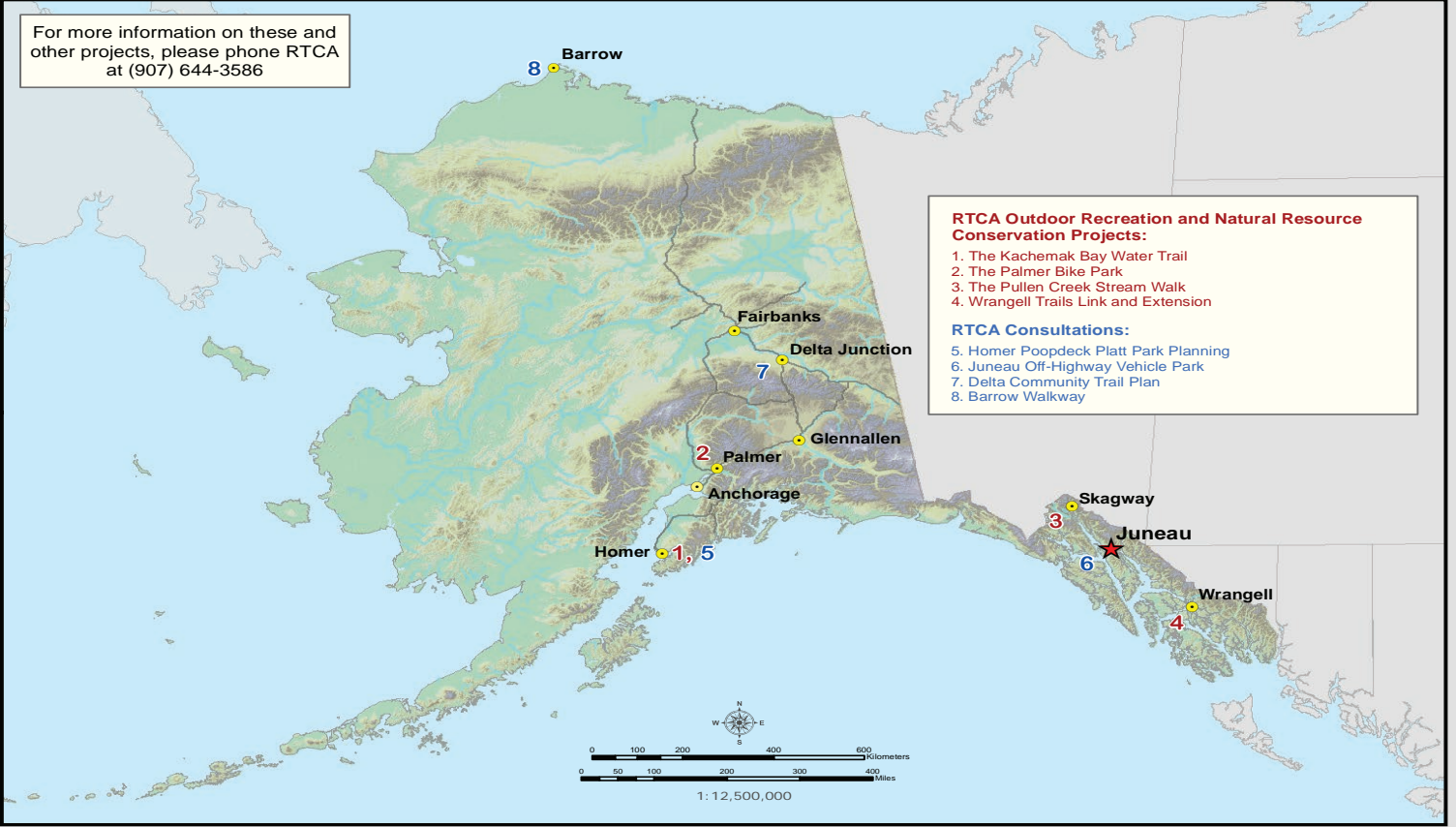
PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2013

Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program NPS RTCA Alaska Projects, FY2013

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



For more information on these and other projects, please phone RTCA at (907) 644-3586



RTCA Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resource Conservation Projects:

1. The Kachemak Bay Water Trail
2. The Palmer Bike Park
3. The Pullen Creek Stream Walk
4. Wrangell Trails Link and Extension

RTCA Consultations:

5. Homer Poopdeck Platt Park Planning
6. Juneau Off-Highway Vehicle Park
7. Delta Community Trail Plan
8. Barrow Walkway