



2016

*Working with Interior Alaska landowners to safeguard the character and natural resources of our community*



## Preserving the Peat Ponds

Much of Interior Alaska Land Trust's work involves helping landowners put conservation easements on their land, but IALT also owns several properties, including the Peat Ponds near the intersection of Goldstream and Murphy Dome Road. Because this property enjoys frequent and diverse public use, IALT is currently working on improvements to accommodate outdoor recreation, while maintaining the natural character of the land.

At twenty-six acres, the Peat Ponds consist largely of wetlands that were created as mitigation following peat mining on the property that occurred from about 1996 through 2003. Thus, the property is an excellent birding spot, attracting such common and uncommon species as sandhill cranes, red-winged blackbirds, and mountain bluebirds.

If birders frequent the Peat Ponds, then so do other scientifically-minded visitors. In April, local company Aquilo demonstrated the use of a quadcopter drone with camera over the peat ponds, and in June, a UAF field entomology course conducted sampling at the Peat Ponds, identifying at least thirteen dragonfly and damselfly species there.

Over time, the Peat Ponds have also become a popular recreational area for local ice skaters, walkers, and skiers. As the IALT Goldstream Greenbelt Project expands, we hope the location will become a starting point from which to explore the numerous publicly accessible and protected winter trails in the Goldstream Valley.

Because the Peat Ponds attract so many and such diverse users, IALT applied for and won a \$10,000 grant from the Rasmuson Foundation for

improvements to the property. This summer, IALT formed a Peat Ponds user-group to gather information in order to make sure the improvements match the community's needs. Just this October, IALT started making improvements on the property with the help of local volunteers. We have blocked off the western parking spot, reshaped and improved the eastern parking lot, and created trails down to the pond edge to improve winter access. Next summer, we plan to continue work by making a summer trail on the northern edge of the pond and a winter trail along the southern edge. This will create an approximately one-mile loop, encircling the pond.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR NEXT WEEK!**



**IALT ANNUAL MEETING**  
 6:30-8:00 pm Thursday 3 November  
 Noel Wien Library Conference Room  
 Speaker: Dr. Ronnie Daanen  
 "This Summer's Permafrost Survey of the Goldstream Valley"

For most properties with conservation easements, IALT simply monitors the properties to ensure they remain in their natural state without any significant damage. For a few other parcels like the Peat Ponds, we have chosen to take a more active role in enhancing the property or improving public access. Thus far, we have based these decisions on our mission statement as well as public input. And so we encourage community members to remain involved in decisions for the Peat Ponds improvements by joining our Peat Pond user's group, attending the IALT annual meeting, or sending us your input.

*--Alex Prichard*



*Photo: S Bishop*

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# Message from the President



*Greetings!*

*As the last vestiges of color drain from the forests and wetlands of Fairbanks and we await the smooth white covers of winter, I'd like to take a moment and reflect on the past year's achievements. With your wonderful help and the help of other invaluable local partners, our all-volunteer board pushed ahead with several major projects and established new conservation easements in partnership with local landowners.*

*On the Cripple Creek Project, we continue to work with our local, state, and national partners to restore the lower reaches of this important historic Chinook salmon rearing stream. IALT successfully applied for a \$60,000 grant from the USF&WS Yukon River Salmon Research and Management Fund to improve fish passage through the Old Chena Ridge Road culvert. Look for this work, which involves the addition of steel baffles and terrain rock within the culvert and a stilling pond on the downstream end, to be completed early next spring. Through the winter, we'll also be working with our partners and finalizing plans for a new culvert farther upstream in the historic Cripple Creek channel at Chena Ridge Road. Expect this massive construction project to occur next summer as well. These are two very significant first steps toward completing this exciting project for Fairbanks and interior fish habitat.*

*We continue to have great community support for our Lower Goldstream Initiative. This summer, we met with residents and users of the Goldstream Public Use Area. Together, we organized a Friends of the Peat Ponds Group, and we applied for and received generous support from the Rasmuson Foundation so that we can better conserve this important community resource. With help from local users, we've already made some significant access improvements. Work will continue through the winter and next summer as we install signage and develop management policies for the Peat Ponds.*

*With your assistance, we continue to enhance the Chena Flats Greenbelt project as well. We worked with local landowner Heather Koponen to establish a conservation easement on her property, expanding the Chena Flats Greenbelt. Thank you, Heather! Also, we handed over title to two parcels comprising nearly 90 acres on the southern end of the project to Borough Parks and Recreation, retaining the development rights through a conservation easement. The Cripple Creek parcel, near the Chena Pump Transfer Station, required significant board resources this summer as we dealt with campers and trespassers again. New signs and a new gate at Chena Pump Road will hopefully reduce these problems.*

*We were pleased to partner with local prominent businessmen Mick Killion and Robert Fox, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to conserve a pair of parcels within the Upper Chena River watershed. Thanks to their generous contributions, these beautiful remote parcels are conserved in-perpetuity. Look for more information on Mick Killion's donation in the Parcel Spotlight in this issue.*

*Thanks to you and to all our members, these achievements and many more are possible. We at the Interior Alaska Land Trust appreciate and make the most of every aspect of your support. 2017 is already looking to be a very busy year and we need your help more than ever. If you're interested in getting involved in any of these projects, please let me know. As always, thank you for your contributions, and thank you for your invaluable support. Fairbanks is a wonderful community and we enjoy working with you, and all of our partners, toward making it even better.*

*Best wishes for the winter ahead,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Curtis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

## **Land Conserved by IALT**

11 parcels owned, 308 acres

29 parcels with easements, 951  
acres

**1259 TOTAL ACRES CONSERVED**

# New Faces at IALT

## Meet Our Newest Board Member:

My name is Seth Adams, a new board member with the Interior Alaska Land Trust. I am a life-long Fairbanksan, and I am a trails guy.

I only recently learned of the IALT. This summer I was working on an easement acquisition for some local trails (something that is still in progress), and I was advised that they might make a good partner. I contacted Owen Guthrie, came to a meeting, and decided it was a group of people that I'd like to be involved with. I was very impressed with the efficacy and thoughtfulness of the entire group. So I joined the board.



My focus will remain on trails issues. Many people in Fairbanks are surprised to learn about the tenuous status of many trails in Fairbanks. The Goldstream Valley has several heavily-used and well-loved arterial trails that are in trespass - which is to say they are on private land without an easement. If the landowner simply decided to put up a gate then the trail could be gone tomorrow. This is why I've become involved in trails advocacy, and why I've chosen to get involved with the IALT - it's a group of people who are interested in protecting the things that we love about Fairbanks. I look forward to continuing to work to protect trails in Fairbanks with the help of the Interior Alaska Land Trust!

--Seth Adams

## Meet Our New Wetlands Project Coordinator:



Nikki Baird joined the team this fall and will be in charge of outreach for and the implementation of projects in the Goldstream Valley Greenbelt and the Chena Flats Greenbelt, among others. Nikki, along with her husband and daughter, relocated to Fairbanks in February of 2016. She previously worked for non-profit organizations in Corvallis, Oregon and Clayton, New York. Non-profit work is Nikki's professional specialty and being outdoors with her family is her passion.

"I am thrilled to join the Interior Alaska Land Trust. When my family and I moved to Fairbanks, we skied and hiked in many areas conserved by IALT, which helped us to quickly fall in love with the area and feel at home. I believe that a healthy community depends on access to useable green space for recreation and exploration. I am proud to be working for an organization that does its part to ensure the wellbeing of Interior Alaska's residents – both human & wildlife. I greatly look forward to working with the Fairbanks community and IALT to protect and maintain the beautiful green spaces of the Interior."

--Nikki Baird

## Meet Our New Accreditation Coordinator:

Greetings IALT members! I'm Kayde Kaiser and I accepted the position of Accreditation Coordinator this September. Last autumn I moved to Fairbanks from Missoula, Montana, where I was the Program Manager for the Montana Geographic Alliance. I have degrees in Earth Science and Geography from Montana State University – Bozeman and the University of Montana in Missoula.



IALT began the process of accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance in May, and we hope to earn our accreditation by summer of 2017. There are over 350 accredited land trusts in the US and a handful right here in Alaska. Land trusts earn accreditation by exhibiting policies and practices recommended by the Land Trust Alliance. These best practices not only help land trusts become better stewards of land, but also more capable of collaborating and securing competitive grants.

Currently we are in the process of a self-assessment where we are examining how IALT addresses each of the 12 standards set by the Land Trust Alliance. Upon completion of this assessment, we will likely revise a few of our policies and practices by the New Year. Our ultimate goal is to gain the skills and capacity through accreditation to better fulfill our mission of land stewardship in Interior Alaska.

--Kayde Kaiser

### Parcel Spotlight

Earlier this year, Mr. Mick Killion approached the Interior Alaska Land Trust with a five acre parcel he's owned for many years within the boundaries of the Chena River State Recreation Area near the new Mastadon Creek Trail (under construction). Mr. Killion tried to work out a deal with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation but for a variety of budgetary reasons, DNR was unable to accept the parcel, even as a donation.

Thankfully, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers put Mr. Killion in contact with IALT. With the generous donation from Mr. Killion, and facilitated with membership donations to cover a portion of the stewardship fees, we were able to accept the parcel and ensure that this beautiful piece of land will remain undeveloped and free to be enjoyed by anyone using the trail, forever.

IALT would like to thank Mr. Killion and you, our members and supporters, for making this deal possible. --Owen Guthrie

### 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

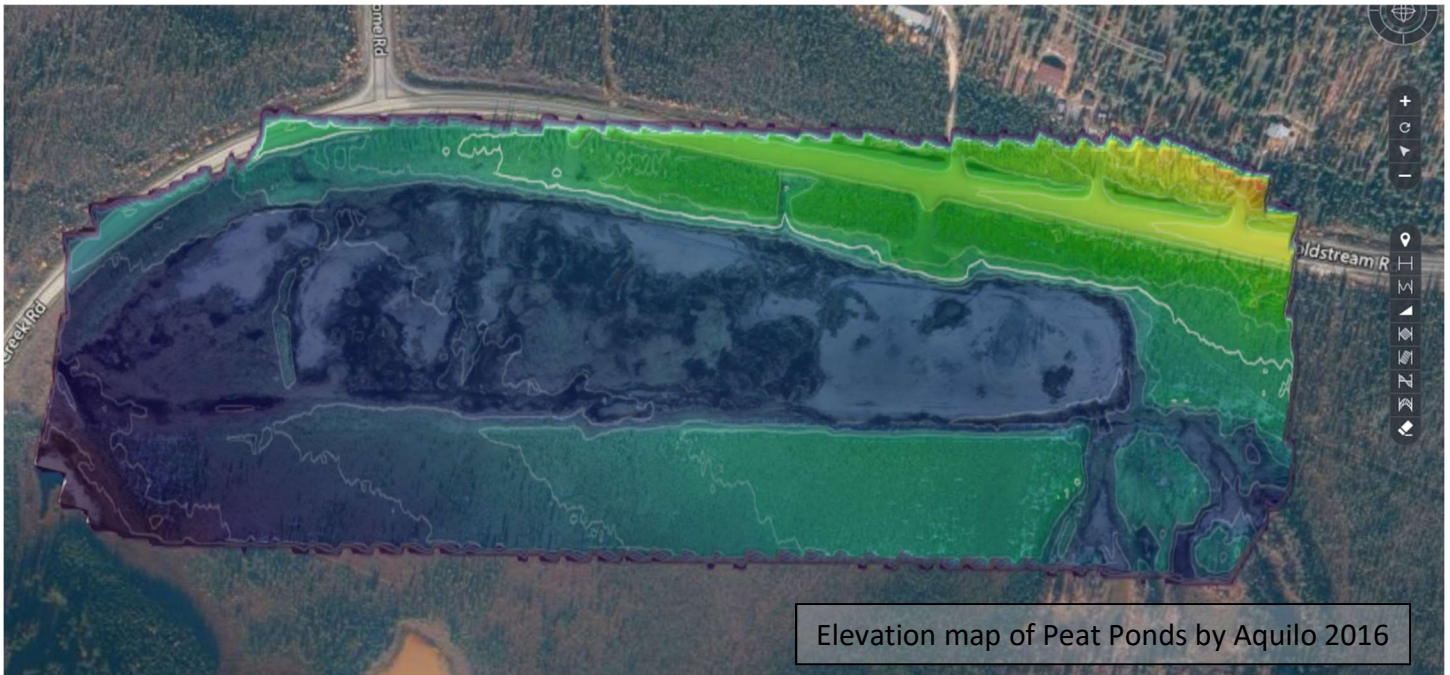
#### Income

Interest	1,239
Membership	1,990
Donations	22,404
Government grants	58,493
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>84,126</b>

#### Expenses

Conferences and meetings	1,694
Special Events	1,945
Operating expenses	3,429
Land acquisition	7,150
Land stewardship	11,324
Contract services	21,543
Facilities and Equipment	75
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>47,160</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>36,966*</b>

\*mostly set aside for property stewardship



## Ensuring a Sound, Sustainable Land Trust

The Interior Alaska Land Trust was incorporated in 1995 by a group of Fairbanks residents interested in preserving the elements of wilderness and access to public land in and around Fairbanks and across the Interior. The organization is run by a volunteer board of directors and has no permanent paid staff nor does it have a formal office.

The Land Trust does hire interns interested in how land trusts operate and, on occasion, has some funds for help on special projects for which it hires part-time, project-specific staff. The Trust grew slowly from its beginnings and now holds conservation easements on or owns about 1,300 acres of land in and around Fairbanks.

The IALT is a member of the national Land Trust Alliance, which provides legislative support and procedural, legal and insurance services for the over 1,300 land trusts in the United States. In Alaska there are seven land trusts, each dedicated to a specific area of the State. One of these trusts is the Nature Conservancy and its staff from Anchorage was helpful to us in the initiation of our land trust.

One service of the Land Trust Alliance is to provide respected accreditation certification to those land trusts who refine their organization's policies and procedures so as to reach a level of professionalism as defined by the Alliance. That accreditation ensures that land trusts complying and demonstrating these high quality services

can provide the public a high level of trust and ensure that participant land owners are well served.

The Interior Alaska Land Trust began the accreditation process three years ago by refining its policies and bylaws in accord with the Land Trust Alliance's Standards. It is a hard and demanding process for a volunteer organization requiring rewriting policies, changing our procedures and doing things in more professional ways to reduce risk and meet regulatory and legal compliance with Alaska and federal laws. We have received some help and funding from the Land Trust Alliance to conduct our review and initiate our changes.

Our board members have each been delegated a specific standard or standards covering our existing processes to review and compare to other land trusts' policies. We are refining ours to meet the accreditation standards. By this process, we are codifying our institutional memory, creating processes to ensure work gets done, keeping us better informed and improving our teamwork. It has been an educational and organizational challenge that we will finish over time with the first element due to the Alliance in January 2017. With the work we are doing our budget, fundraising, and stewardship of the land become tighter, and we can serve the public and land owners more effectively.

-- Merritt Helferich

# Goldstream Valley Greenbelt Initiative

Last fall I joined the Interior Alaska Land Trust as the Wetlands Conservation Project Coordinator. As the Land Trust's only employee from last November to this August, I was able to get involved in pretty much every aspect of the Land Trust's work. I'm excited about all of our projects, but one of my favorites was the Goldstream Valley Greenbelt project.

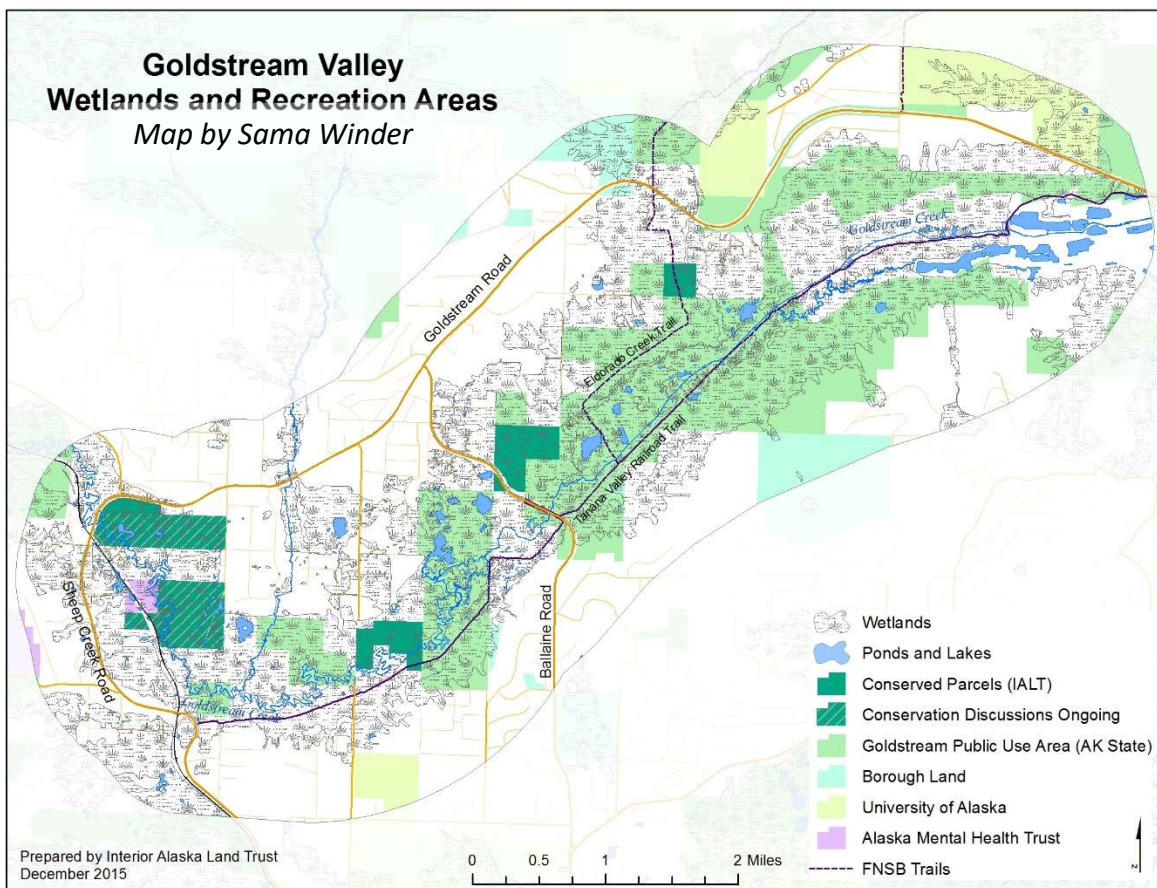
Building on our success with the Chena Flats Greenbelt (550 acres are protected and open to the public!), IALT decided to start focusing more on Goldstream Valley. While you probably know the Valley has miles and miles of winter trails used and loved by the community, what you may not know is just how many of those trails are on private property. We think those trails and the open, undeveloped space in the center of the Valley are what make the area such a special part of Fairbanks, which is why we are working to protect them for the community to continue to enjoy.

In December we sent letters to about fifty people who own land in the Valley, asking them to consider

protecting their land. We followed this up with a community meeting in the spring at the Ken Kunkel Community Center, where we explained our goals and asked for feedback. The response has been very positive, and our outreach efforts have resulted in many excellent conversations and several promising conservation leads. If you own land in the Valley or want to help on this project, please get in touch!

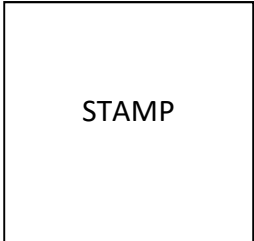
We already manage the Peat Ponds and Blueberry Preserves properties in Goldstream, and this year we have been working with The Conservation Fund to purchase almost 350 acres south of the Peat Ponds, including two beautiful properties with long stretches of Goldstream Creek and lots of great moose habitat. We also look after two conservation easements on private land in the Valley. While there is a lot more work to do, I think that we have already made great strides towards protecting this special part of Fairbanks, and I'm excited to see what comes next!

--Sama Winder

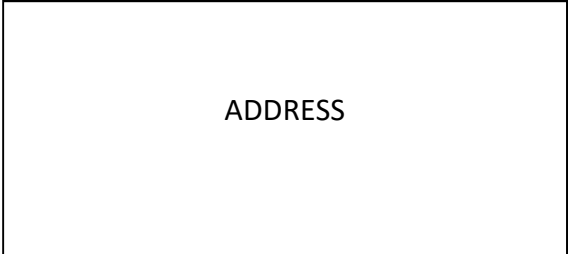




P.O. Box 84169  
Fairbanks, AK 99708-4169



**Annual Meeting**  
Nov. 3, 6:30-8:00 pm  
Noel Wien Library  
Conference Room



### MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

**Board of Directors:** Seth Adams, Owen Guthrie, Merritt Helfferich, Alex Prichard, Martha Reynolds, Sama Winder

**Community Volunteers:** Sue & Dan Bishop, Karen Brewster, Larry Byrne, Frank Keim, the Levey family, Tom Paragi, Jennifer Schell

### AND TO OUR MEMBERS

Courtney Amundson, Christin Anderson, Alan Batten, Dan and Sue Bishop, Scott Bredbenner, Larry and Karla Bright, Dave & Patty Burns, Bob & Linda Bursiel, Mary Burtness & Jeff Adams, Kathy & Robert Cannone, Karen Clautice, Gail Davidson, Linda Schandelmeier & John Davies, Jen & Peter Delamere, Anne Doerpinghaus & Bill Witte. Muffy & Jim Durst, Nora Foster, Louise Foster, Robert Fox, Jimmy & Joanna Fox, Joan Franz & Dave Mather, Roger & Edith Garrett, Tony Gasbarro, Anna Godduhn, Jacquelyn Goss, Faye Harasack, Andy Harrington, Bob & Joann Henszey, Rich Hompesch, Grier Hopkins, Daisy Huang, Janlee & Ken Irving, Barbie Jackson, Jean James, Rick & Cory Johnson & Tina Devine, Torre & Janet Jorgenson, Stan Justice, Carol Kaynor & Dave Partee, Frank & Jennifer Keim. Janet Kidd & Jon Lindstrom, Don Kiely, Mick Killion. Heather Koponen.

Brendan & Nettie LaBelle-Hamer, Julie Lageson, Cam Leonard, Shirley Liss, Matt Macander & Katie Garrity. Jim Magdanz, Steve Masterman & Sarah Swift, Barbara Matthews, Gail Mayo. Brandon McGrath-Bernhard, Bruce McIntosh, Mette Moeller, John & Judi Morack, Greta Myerchin-Tape, Mary Ann Nickles, Jessica Panko, Tom Paragi, Carolyn Parker, Charlie Parr & Marilyn Biagi, Dave Payer & Angela Matz, Patty & Jay Peirsol, Don & Tracie Pendergrast, June Pinnell-Stephens, Roger & Bonita Post. Barbara Powell, Alex Prichard & Angela Larson, Paul & Terry Reichardt, Jane & Terry Reilly, Roselynn Ressa, Marjie Richards, Katharine Richardson, Susan Royston, Anne Ruggles and Don Hampton. Tonya Schlentner, Erik Schoen, Pam Seiser, Libby Silberling, Mark Simon. Doug Sims, Jace Smith, Mike Spindler & Pam Nelson, Nicole Stewart, Jan Stittk Richard & Louise Stoltzberg, Ann & Dan Swift, Karen & Daryl Taber, Walt Tape, Steve Taylor, Susan Todd, Don & Julia Triplehorn, Eric Troyer & Corrine Leistikow, Jeffery Walters, William Walters, Cindy & Andy Wentworth, Michael Whaler, Paulette Wille, Jennine Williamson & John Fitzgerald, Mary Zalar & Ken Whitten

Corporate donor: ABR, Inc

Grantors: US Fish & Wildlife Service, Rasmuson Foundation, Land Trust Alliance



