



Interior
Alaska
Land Trust

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2012

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



An Introduction to the Land Trust

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he Interior Alaska Land Trust (IALT) is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization, started in 1995. Its mission is to safeguard the character of the land and the natural resources of our community by working with Interior Alaska landowners to acquire, protect, or manage natural,

scenic, recreational, agricultural, historic, or cultural aspects of property.

Land trusts can be found in every state. There are more than 1,600 of them, some over 100 years old. There are seven in Alaska alone. Land trusts have protected over 12 million acres of land in the U.S. They are mostly local organizations. In every case, land trusts work only with willing land owners, and support land issues that are important to their own communities.

The Interior Alaska Land Trust serves several purposes in the Fairbanks area. Continuing development throughout the community has brought attention to land use issues. The pace of building, though not as frantic as during pipeline days, is beginning to turn the last remaining undeveloped areas into small pockets, and cutting up trails and greenways that people thought were protected. Private land that people acquired 30 or more years ago has

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increased tremendously in value. Often these are large parcels, and their owners find that their heirs would be required to sell some of the land just to

Land Trust Annual Meeting

You are invited to the Land Trust Annual Meeting, November 6, 2012, Noel Wein Library Conference Room, 6-7:30 pm. Bob Ritchie of ABR, Inc. will be our guest speaker.

pay the inheritance taxes. In these cases, the Interior Alaska Land Trust can hold an easement on the land, reducing its estate tax value, protecting open space, or connecting greenways and trails.

Please consider becoming a member or donating to the Interior Alaska Land Trust. Your tax-deductible contributions help us qualify for grants, leveraging your dollars. You can choose to donate to a specific project described in our newsletter.

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Message from the President

I recently returned from the national Land Trust Alliance “Rally” held in Salt Lake City. Each year, the venue changes, yet the excitement and dedication doesn’t diminish for the hundreds of people working to conserve (and in some instances restore) private land. The Rally is held over three days and offers everything from inspiring keynote speakers, such as the lead scientist with Nature Conservancy, M. Sanjayan, to pertinent workshops. There is also time to network with staff, board members, and volunteers from other land trusts.

I found it particularly interesting this year to attend a session specifically designed to reach out to small, all volunteer land trusts, like Interior Alaska Land Trust (IALT). I was surprised to learn that of the 1,700 land trusts throughout the country, 57% (or 975) fall under this category. That is, they have no more than one part-time person working for them. Also, more than 50% of the all-volunteer land trusts operate with a budget of less than \$20,000. That’s a lot of people dedicating their time and energy towards a common goal – conserving the land in their community.

Being on the board of the IALT has been a rewarding experience for me, yet I returned to Fairbanks questioning how well IALT represents our community, as well as our value to the community. Making a connection with a broader and larger number of folks in our community is a goal of mine and the other board members. We are interested in engaging more of you so we can learn what is valuable to you and where you would like to see us put our efforts. There are a number of ways you can get involved, including becoming a member, attending meetings (see notice of annual meeting), contributing financially to IALT, and volunteering in a way that is meaningful to you and the organization.

Roselynn Ressa



Statewide Meeting in Anchorage

Alaska has seven land trusts, which meet once a year to share ideas and issues specific to Alaska and to find ways to reduce our operating costs and duplicating work. One example of cost savings to all of us was when we hired a consultant to assess our organizations. Several joint teleconferences were held, and the consultant was able to make one trip to Alaska and travel to different parts of the state to work with individual land trusts.

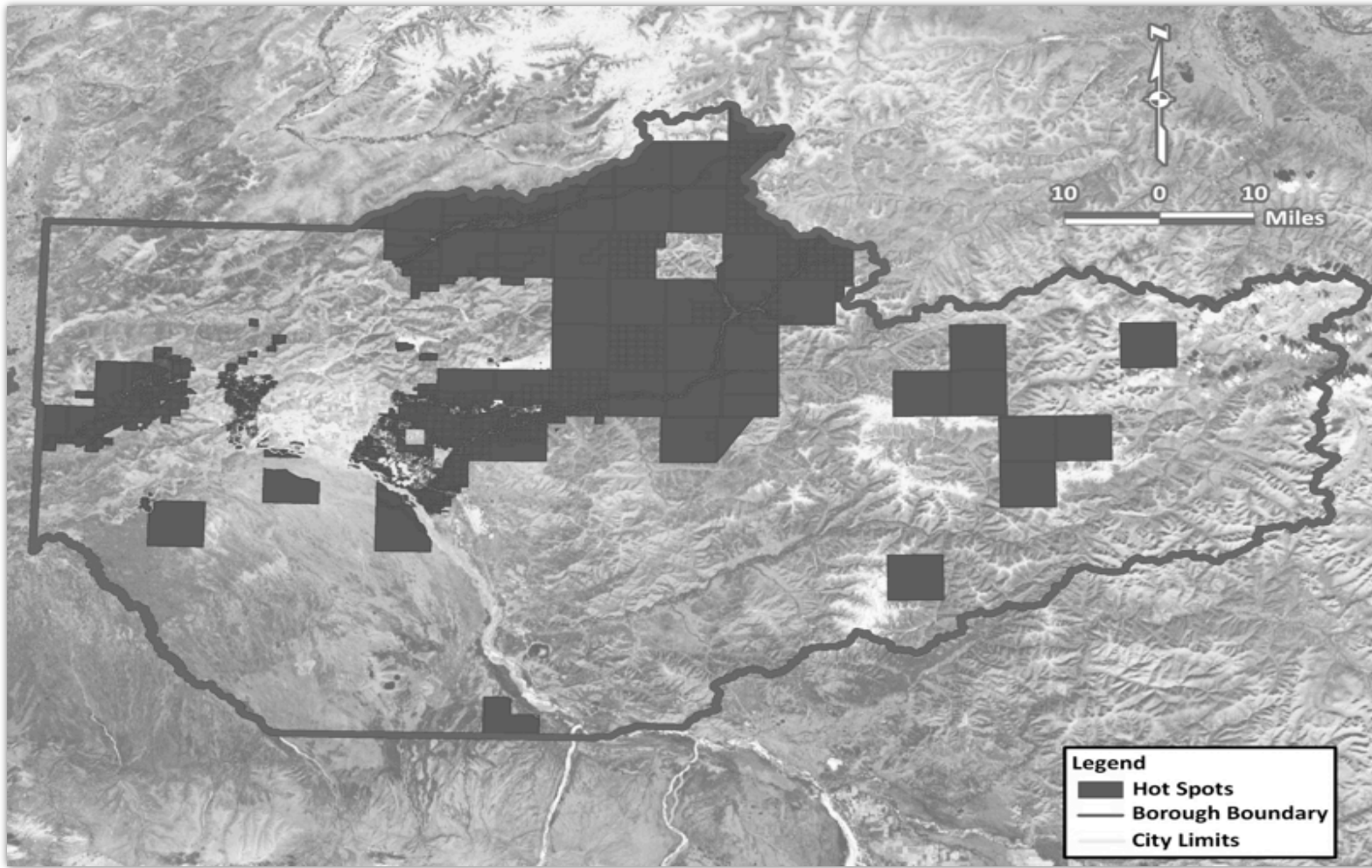
The 2012 Statewide meeting of Alaskan land trusts is being held in Anchorage at the end of October. Besides meeting with several funding partners, such as the Pacific Coast Joint Venture, we will discuss several aspects of conservation easements, such as record keeping, raising and managing stewardship funds, and enforcement. We will also dedicate time to brainstorming other future Alaskan collaborations.

IALT is now
registered with
the Pick Click
Give program
for 2013

very once in a while we are forced to choose one property over another to conserve. And these can be difficult decisions to make. One property is valuable for conservation because it has a salmon stream running through it, another because it is adjacent to Creamer's Field and used to access public land. In an attempt to quantify these differences, and to sort out our own priorities, the IALT contracted with USKH, Inc. to conduct a GIS-based prioritization of properties in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

USKH employees and IALT Board members worked together to develop a list of criteria for ranking each parcel in the Greater Fairbanks Area. They then ranked the importance of each factor, things like proximity to streams, proximity to trails, presence of wetlands on the parcel, etc. Certain parcels, such as those already protected and those already developed, were excluded from the assessment process.

USKH created "Hot Spot" maps highlighting areas of high conservation priority. The IALT will use these maps to identify areas for future conservation and to evaluate individual parcels under consideration for conservation.



New Conservation Easement in Goldstream Valley

The Interior Alaska Land Trust received the donation of a conservation easement on 87 acres in Goldstream Valley, including a portion of Goldstream Creek and the winter trail along the Tanana Valley Railroad. The easement leaves the property in private ownership, for the enjoyment of the owners, while protecting the conservation values of the land. The owners donated the right to subdivide or develop the property to the Interior Alaska Land Trust. However, the owners think that the wetter, less accessible portion of the property should never be developed. It will provide a long-term benefit to Fairbanks residents, protecting Goldstream Creek and its watershed, providing wildlife habitat, and eliminating development that might block the winter trail.



Internship Program

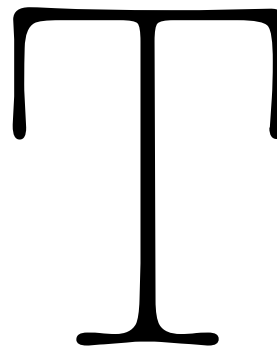
The Interior Alaska Land Trust has launched an internship program in cooperation with Professor Susan Todd at the School of Natural projects

Include Resources Management at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Land Trust will pay tuition for up to three credits. Dr. Todd has offered to be the faculty sponsor for the students. The Land Trust has many opportunities for student involvement, though the actual project would be tailored to the particular student's interests and skills. Possible projects include:

- 1) Surveying residents around the Chena Flats Greenbelt project to identify their awareness and uses of the Land Trust property
- 2) Trails on the Chena Flats Greenbelt - this could include mapping existing trails, suggesting & planning new trails, envisioning connections between these trail and the larger trail system in the surrounding Ester-Tanana River area.
- 3) GIS projects: creating maps of Land Trust properties, including maps to use at public meetings
- 4) Researching the history of a part of Fairbanks relevant to IALT goals and writing an article for our newsletter and web site.
- 5) Non-profit grant-writing work with a board member
- 6) Public event planning - orchestrating a public event focused around either the Chena Flats Greenbelt, conservation prioritization or fundraising for a particular parcel.
- 7) Researching fisheries on Cripple Creek or some other topic on Land Trust properties.

The National Land Trust Alliance Rally

Interior Land Trust President, Roselynn Ressa and board member Merritt Helfferich attended the Land Trust Alliance annual Rally conference in Salt Lake, Utah from September 29th to October 3. They went to workshops and sessions on several issues of interest to the Interior Alaska Land Trust.



The Land Trust Alliance is a national organization of the 1,700 land trusts in the United States that provides various kinds of support for land trust development and conservation activities. One of the most recent support activities is the creation of a legal fund to help member land trusts to defend the conservation qualities of their easements on land. Some of the seminars our board members

attended at the Rally included one on Developing a Case for Support that Raises Revenue; a Board Member seminar on Increasing Community Support; Major Gift Giving; Small Land Trusts- Building the Tools for Support and others. We were heartened to hear that the Alliance is very interested in providing additional support for All Volunteer Land Trusts (AVLT).

We learned some interesting statistics for the Interior Alaska Land Trust and other AVLTS in that 57% of the 1,700 Land Trusts are AVLTS. Of the total number of land trusts, 975 of the Land Trusts are AVLTS. More than 60% of land trusts are AVLTS because of a lack of resources. More than 50% of AVLTS have an annual budget of less than \$20,000. AVLTS have 1% of 47 million acres protected land in the country.

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The Interior Alaska Land Trust is an AVLIT operation with occasional part-time paid assistance for specific activities and the trust now holds conserved properties consisting of 1,143.5 acres. Of these 411.2 acres are owned by the trust (on which we pay taxes) and 732.4 acres are under conservation easements. This raises the question of when and whether to hire permanent staff to be able to appropriately cope with the Trust's increased responsibilities. To make that change requires a major change in our approach and a need for raising funds for the long term. This is a big step and will not be attempted for some time if at all. With the promise of additional support from the Land Trust Alliance for AVLITs it may not be necessary.

By the time you receive this newsletter several board members will have attended the October 2012 Alaska Statewide Land Trust meeting in Anchorage where issues of mutual support and collective improvements in land trust activities will have been discussed by

the Land Trust members attending the meeting. We believe there are actions that the several land trusts can conduct that will make our work easier and more effective.

There are seven individual land trusts in Alaska and three statewide land trusts. These are Interior Alaska Land Trust in Fairbanks, the Great Land Land Trust in Anchorage, the Southeast Land Trust in Juneau, the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust in Homer, the Organized Village of Kasaan Land Trust in Ketchikan, the Native Conservancy in Cordova, and the Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood Tikchik Land Trust in Dillingham. The three statewide trusts are: The Nature Conservancy, the Conservation Fund and the Trust for Public Lands.

Merritt Helfferich



Chena Flats Greenbelt Sign Installation

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e at the land trust have been talking about signage for the Chena Flats Greenbelt for quite awhile, something to show people where the Greenbelt is and to give some of our sponsors a

bit of recognition for sticking with us in developing this green space. With about 500 acres of land in the Greenbelt, there was a thoughtful discussion of where to put a few signs, and as always with our group there were several opinions of where, so we agreed upon 3 sites to start with.

IALT volunteers met at the Just A Store on Chena Pump Road on September 16, 2012. We had a pretty good turnout of volunteers considering it was Saturday and a nice day to boot. Tako Raynolds was there with her partner Sam. Board members Alex Prichard and that old workhorse Merritt Helfferich were there, and myself. We drove down Chena Pump Road to the Old Chena Ridge Road across from Chena Small Tracts Road. We turned right onto Old Chena Ridge Road, went past the borough's transfer site, and over Cripple Creek. We put our first sign down on the right side by the trail. Since Tako was the only woman, she was the boss of the men for

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the day (actually the only one with a artistic sense of balance). So we men held the sign while Tako walked the road until she decided where was just the right spot for our sign. A bit about the signs: they are quite professional and look a lot like a Fish and Wildlife sign and we all were pleasantly surprised at how nice they looked. We sorted out our jobs of drilling the holes, holding the signpost level and plumb, mixing concrete and fastening the signs. This was all with the banter of a new crew on the job, with "don't knock anymore dirt in with that concrete," and plenty of "you got a permit for diggin' that hole?" and the always present "one more picture for the newsletter." We got her done and moved on down to The Pump House to install our second sign. The outlet for Cripple Creek is just downstream of The Pump House and over a green manicured lawn, where she trickles into the Chena River (both of the waters were quite low). With the blessing of The Pump House owner, Mr. Bubell, we went to work installing the second sign overlooking the outlet. We were finishing up and just about ready for a beer when Tako came along, accompanied by Mr. Bubell. It was interesting to hear some of his views on the Greenbelt and the development taking place in the Chena Flats area. His thoughts reminded me to get out some more and hear what other people are saying about the rate of development in our area. I like The Pump House and that period of history it represents. It's easy to be

Parking lot on Pickering Drive

hired a contractor to build a small, three-car parking lot on Pickering Drive near the Roland Road end. We hope that the parking lot will allow people to come from further afield, and will minimize landowner conflicts and maximize safety on the road. We have also installed an interpretive sign in the parking lot describing the history and wildlife values of the Greenbelt, and hope to eventually cut the trail so that it leaves the end of the parking lot and connects to existing trails on Greenbelt properties.

There is now designated parking for the Chena Flats Greenbelt! The IALT, in cooperation with US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Fairbanks North Star Borough,



lulled into thinking most of our history has been saved even when we know that's not the case. With one more sign to go, nobody gave into the temptation to go for that beer. We headed on down Chena Pump Road to Roland Road, took a right onto Roland Road and headed on down to Pickering Drive. We took a left onto Pickering. Going less than a mile, we headed downhill, slowly, because at the bottom of the dip on the left is the new parking lot (3 car limit), just past Vivian Lane. That's where we put in our third sign. This parking lot is something new for the land trust. It's a bit of necessary development in the midst of no development, because there was no parking to access the Greenbelt and traffic was beginning to become a problem, hence the new parking area. So once again, out with the tools and into the mud. It is wet, so bring your Bean boots if you want to stay dry. Now this crew was just hitting it's stride, and we knocked out this last one at the end of the new parking lot.

I'd like to thank everyone involved, especially Sam. This guy is gone from home, working out of town for over a month and on his second day home, he's backing up his partner putting up signs down at the Chena Flats Greenbelt. We sure appreciate his help, and if you would like to make your mark on Fairbanks, Interior Alaska Land Trust sure could use a bit of help. Consider joining the IALT.

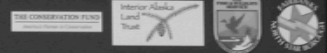
See you on the trail,

Mike Stredny

Cripple Creek Rehab

The Cripple Creek rehabilitation project will continue in the coming year with additional funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The funding will allow us to continue to work with Herrera Environmental during the design phase of the project. Herrera Environmental is a consulting firm that specializes in ecological restoration, site and community ecological planning, and sustainability and resource management. We have identified a course of action for returning stream flow to Cripple Creek on the portion of the creek owned by the IALT on Chena Pump Road between Old Chena Ridge (near the transfer station) and new Chena Ridge Roads. The next steps are computer modeling and design, and then meeting with stakeholders, and finally construction oversight.

Cripple Creek - A Creek Divided



Every Little Bit of Habitat Helps

Cripple Creek was diverted from its natural channel to the Cripple Creek Ditch in the 1930s.

Much of the abandoned Creek channel still exists. Re-routing water from the Ditch back into the original creek channel will provide rearing and spawning habitat for salmon and grayling. Though currently grayling are present, the Ditch has little of the natural meandering of a stream and the pool/riffle habitat that is so important for a fish to feed and hide from predators.

The Interior Alaska Land Trust seeks to restore the original creek channel as part of the Chena Flats Greenbelt Project.



Financial Report

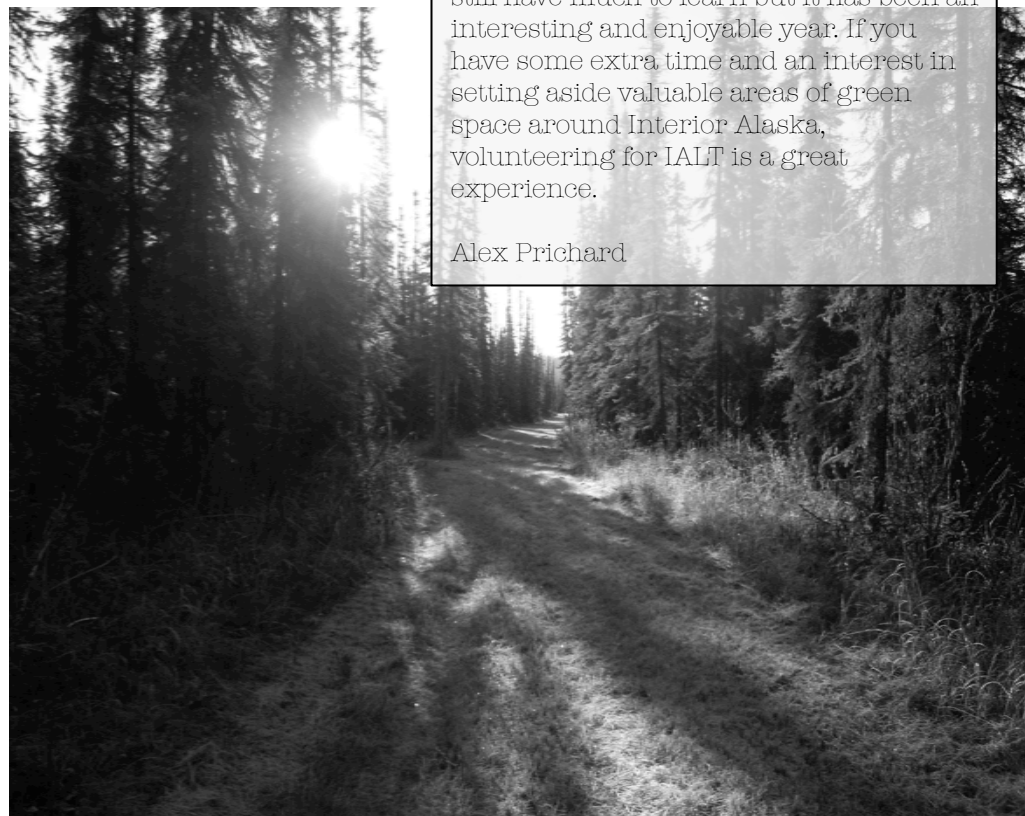
In Fiscal Year 2011, the Interior Alaska Land Trust received most of its income from cooperative agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help accomplish our mission of protecting natural habitat. The funds supported the GIS prioritization mapping (see article), the feasibility study for returning flow to Cripple Creek (see article), as well as stewardship activities on properties that the Land Trust conserves. 2011 expenses were spent almost entirely on program services (96 %), with only 4 % spent on management and fundraising.



Board Member Perspective

As the newest IALT Board Member I would like to encourage everyone to consider becoming active in the IALT as either a board member or volunteer. I started volunteering as a Board Member and IALT secretary about a year ago and it has been a pleasure to work with such a knowledgeable and dedicated group. I have to admit, even though I pass the Peat Ponds and Blueberry Preserves areas almost daily, I was largely unaware of all the great things IALT has been doing around Interior Alaska. This group of volunteers has quietly and expertly been making a tremendous contribution to the quality of life for everyone in Fairbanks. I still have much to learn but it has been an interesting and enjoyable year. If you have some extra time and an interest in setting aside valuable areas of green space around Interior Alaska, volunteering for IALT is a great experience.

Alex Prichard



Financial Report

Income	
Interest	1,001
Public support	4,490
Government grants	124,183
Membership	330
Total Income	130,004
Expense	
Conferences	2,780
Contracts	72,191
Land/Easement acquisition	7,036
Land stewardship	16,142
Operations	2,316
Total Expense	100,464
Net Income	29,540

Board of Directors



Roselynn Ressa — President
Mike Stredny — Vice President
Martha Reynolds — Treasurer
Merritt Helfferich
Collin Todd
Alex Prichard

Contractors

Sally Andersen, Chena Flats Greenbelt
Project Coordinator
Riley Witte, Outreach Coordinator

Contact Us

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